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MICHAEL COLLINS AND LEADERSHIP

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ABSTRACT

Michael Collins and Leadership

Thomas F. Campion

Michael Collins was the most important figure who fought for the Irish people during the 1920 Anglo-Irish War. While this paper addresses much of the work he did from 1916 to 1920 in seeking Ireland's independence from British rule, its focus is on two aspects of his effort. The first is his leadership in negotiating and implementing the December 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty which brought an end to that war and then successfully urged the Irish people to accept the Treaty. The second is his leadership in doing all that was possible to avoid civil war brought by those Irish dissatisfied with the Treaty. While he failed in that effort, after that war broke out, he led a successful defense of that war for the newly formed Irish government. He broke the resistance of the insurgents, helped defeat this rebellion but paid the price when he was shot and killed by the rebels during an ambush. The Irish government he left behind on his death has endured for more than a century. More than any other person he was responsible for the establishment and success of the modern Irish nation.

1. Introduction.

The twentieth century is filled with examples of people who sought to overthrow the governments under which they lived but which maintained power over them and their fellow citizens without their consent. This paper discusses one of those examples: how the Irish people brought the British government's long control over most of Ireland to an end in 1922. It is the story of Michael Collins, a primary leader in that effort, and how and why he used violence to help achieve that end. His primary work as a leader of the Irish forces, however, was in his active participation in the 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty negotiations which led to Ireland's immediate freedom from British rule, and in leading the new independent Irish nation created by the peace treaty in its victory in the civil war started by some former associates of Collins who sought to set aside the peace Treaty This paper discusses his leadership in those efforts.

England had begun its conquest of Ireland in the twelfth century with only modest success. In 1690, at the Battle of the Boyne fought in County Meath, England defeated the remaining Gaelic chiefs, thus concluding its conquest of Ireland. England confiscated the lands of the defeated chiefs and resettled Ulster¹ with Scots and English settlers, an event which continues to exert a profound effect on that island. In 1801 there was a formal legislative

union between England and Ireland. That eliminated the Irish Parliament. In 1829 Irish nationalists, led by Daniel O'Connell, achieved Catholic Emancipation and Irish Catholics began to be elected to seats in Parliament at Westminster.

Much more could be written about Ireland's development under British rule, but this paper will note only one further matter: the Great Irish Potato Famine which Ireland suffered in the late 1840s and early 1850s. This catastrophe led to the starvation of about one million poor Irish men, women and children and the emigration of another one and one-half million Irish men, women, and children to other countries to avoid starvation and death at home. The failure of the British government to provide substantial relief in those events left a level of hostility to Britain among those who survived the Famine, their descendants, and the entire Irish people. That hostility, which often reached the level of hatred, became, and remained part of the Irish culture.

As of 1919, the people of Ireland had been ruled by the British government to a greater or lesser extent for over seven hundred years. This rule was frequently resisted by some Irish who opposed that continuing domination. Success, however, in bringing the English and Irish populations together over the seven hundred years was limited. Many political figures

over those centuries had positive or negative roles in those efforts. But it was one young Irishman, Michael Collins, whose military and political activities starting in 1916, and continuing through 1922, were major events in the history of Ireland. He ultimately moved away from seeking a solution based on violence and helped achieve a peaceful solution through direct negotiations with leaders of the British government. The political resolution Collins helped achieve has lasted to this day. In the history of Ireland's pursuit of independence, supported by so many of the country's inhabitants, no person contributed more than did Collins. He showed what leadership means and the cost to those who exercise it. Once peace was established with the British his efforts were subsequently directed to ending the Irish Civil War which followed the settlement with Britain. Those efforts led to his being killed in battle in Ireland during an ambush by the rebel forces. He was only thirty-one years old. His most significant leadership, then, was found in what he did in the Treaty negotiations, his work in enforcing the Treaty and establishing the new government for Ireland and, finally, the action he took to help the new Irish government win the Civil War started by anti-Treaty forces.²

This paper is not a biography³ of Collins or a detailed discussion of his many achievements during and after the Anglo-Irish War. Instead, it addresses how he achieved and used leadership in the best sense of that word

to achieve Irish independence from Britain. The people of Ireland, both his contemporaries and those who have come after them, owe him a debt they can never repay. They try though – people put fresh flowers on his grave every day.

2. 1890-1916. Collins Develops His Character

Michael Collins was born on October 16, 1890, to a self-supporting farm family in County Cork.⁴ The farm, known as Woodfield, was among the most valuable land in the district. His father, also named Michael, was sixty-two when he married Marianne, a woman of twenty-two. They had eight children who all were spared the hunger known to other Irish children of their generation.⁵ Michael was the youngest.⁶ It seems clear the relationship among the children and with their parents was a stable one. Michael's father died in 1897 at which time Marianne became the effective head of the family.⁷ She made sure young Michael was raised in a sound family and received whatever local education was available. That education ended in 1906⁸ but did not include study at a university.

Marianne was aware of the limited career opportunities available to all young Irishmen in their home country. She decided her son would benefit from entering government work. Michael complied with her wishes, applied

himself to that effort and passed the Civil Service examinations with excellence.⁹ Among the white-collar opportunities which therefore became available, he chose a position with the Post Office Savings Bank managed by the British government.¹⁰ That work was carried out in London to which he moved in 1906. His sister Hannie (eleven years his senior) already had a position at the bank and was successful in that work. Hannie became his confidante and counsellor especially after Marianne died in 1907.¹¹ He lived with Hannie in London, and it was almost ten years before he returned to Ireland on any permanent basis.

What is known about Michael's talents and interests during his London years? He had become widely read on his own¹² and attended the theatre with attention to the works of George Bernard Shaw and J. M. Barrie.¹³ He did not lack self-confidence, and was strong willed, in good health, physically active, large and well developed, quick to engage in wrestling, talented in financial matters, and devoted to causes which favored the independence of the Irish people. He was a credit to his family¹⁴ but had not yet taken up acts of violence against British forces and interests. He was a young Irishman starting to find his place in a world dominated by a strong British government that was opposed by weak groups of Irish protesters against continuing British rule.

He stayed in London for almost ten years. His work at the Post Office was done at a modest level. In 1910 he left that position and took employment at Horne & Co., a brokerage firm. Horne took orders for shares from the public and farmed them to jobbers who would place the orders.¹⁵ Collins took charge of the firm's messengers and was also responsible for preparation of the fortnightly trial balances.¹⁶ In 1914 he was laid off by Horne when World War I began, and the stock exchanges were temporarily closed. He quickly found a new position with the London office of Guaranty Trust of New York. He showed talent in money management matters (he managed Guaranty's bill department) and was well paid.¹⁷ In fact he had become a member of what was sometimes described as 'the black-coated ranks of the lower middle class,'¹⁸ a term used to describe white collar workers. Nevertheless, his full-time career in money management in the private sector would soon come to an end.

He had a private life in London where his first attention was to sporting matters. He joined the London Irish by becoming a member of the Geraldine Hurling Club, a group run by the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA).¹⁹ This activity involved playing Gaelic football and participating in track and field meets.²⁰ As a player on the GAA Geraldine team, he was intensively competitive but, according to one historian, "a valuable foot soldier but not

yet officer material.”²¹ While “he played fair, his hair-trigger temperament meant that if a row developed on the field he was generally either its cause or a participant.”²² Beyond the sporting scene he had an interest in attending the theatre. He had a continuing interest in reading and improving his situation.²³ Of note is that he made cursing a primary part of his vocabulary. Cursing came easily to Collins,²⁴ as it still does to many Irishmen of modest backgrounds there or in the places to which they have emigrated.

In addition to his GAA work, he was sworn into the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) in 1909. In time it became known as the Irish Republican Army (IRA).²⁵ The IRB was in theory an army in-waiting dedicated to overthrowing British rule over Ireland by physical force.²⁶ He had become an oath-bound revolutionary, even if action were yet to come. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there were several Irish organizations dedicated in principle, and occasionally in action, to ending British rule in Ireland. The IRB was one of those organizations.

Home Rule of Ireland by the Irish people, which had been defeated in the nineteenth century during Gladstone’s time as British Prime Minister, became an active political issue again as World War I approached. The Protestant majority in the Ulster counties, often called the Orangemen, was intensely opposed to any Home Rule legislation. It wanted to maintain its

position as part of Great Britain and not be subject to rule in a nation dominated by Catholics elsewhere in the island.²⁷ That led to the formation of armed Protestant “Ulster Volunteers” who defended their special position.²⁸ The Catholic population in the rest of Ireland (often called the South or the twenty-six counties) countered this move in Ulster by forming Volunteers from its own population, effectively to oppose the action of the Ulster Volunteers.²⁹ In April 1914 Collins joined the Volunteers from the South (later they would be known as the Irish Republican Army or simply the IRA).³⁰ To the extent any organization had leadership or control over those Volunteers, it was the IRB.³¹

When World War I broke out in August 1914, the members of Parliament representing voters in Ireland stood with the British. Meanwhile the British government legislated a proposed solution to the ongoing dispute with the Irish. Home Rule in Ireland was voted into law, but its implementation was to be delayed until the end of the war.³² During the war with Germany, Irishmen both from Ulster and the South fought honorably and with great losses.³³

Collins found himself being drawn more into matters hostile to British rule of his homeland. He joined Sinn Fein, a political party, in 1908. More will be said of that group later in this paper. Given his character, it was inevitable

that Collins's effort to move towards some form of leadership position in the independence movement would lead to action on his part. Given the enormous losses Britain was experiencing on the battlefields in France, conscription was moving to the front of the line in the political front.³⁴ Collins would have been subject to that military draft. The Irish Volunteers he had joined (then numbering about 15,000) were determined to oppose any conscription effort in Ireland by the British government.³⁵ For all these reasons his thoughts turned towards returning to Ireland to take some form of action.

Accordingly, Collins gave his notice to Guaranty Trust saying he was going to "join up." Guaranty gave him an extra week's pay which he donated to the IRB.³⁶ He let Hannie know he was aware of a coming fray in Ireland and was going back there to join his friends. Realist that she was, she is reported to have told him: "They'll let you down, Michael. They'll let you down."³⁷ Nevertheless, on January 15, 1916, he left London and moved to Dublin. He was now twenty-six years old and had returned to Ireland looking for a fight. He found it quickly. His life was about to change in ways he could not have imagined.

3. 1916-1919. Collins Becomes a Leader

What, then, was known about Collins's talents and interests as he reached Dublin? Although both his parents had died by then, he very much remained a family man. He had lived for a decade with his sister Hannie. She provided assistance and direction, as he found his way in a London private life centered on Irish and Gaelic interests. He had steady employment and spent much of his free time participating in sporting matters. He was a diligent worker, boisterous, had the capacity and talent to manage financial matters³⁸ and was showing an increasing interest (perhaps a need) in being a leader. His intelligence was obvious, as was his temper which he showed often. Collins had signed on to supporting independence for Ireland, joining at least two organizations supporting that goal. Most of all, by January 1916, he was ready for and committed to participating in violent action in Ireland. There was then no woman in his life. His mother was dead. His sister remained in London. Most of all, Kitty Kiernan had not yet entered his life.

It did not take Collins long to find the fight he sought. Trouble was in the air. He gravitated towards the Plunkett family at their Larkfield home in Kimmage in Ireland. That family was active in anti-British uprising activities.³⁹ The Volunteers and other groups⁴⁰ were planning for some form of military action in Dublin. Weapons to support such action were limited, as was any serious military planning. Without reviewing all the activity leading

to the uprising, as to which Collins was then a minor player, several hundred lightly armed rebels entered downtown Dublin on the day after Easter Sunday 1916.⁴¹ They occupied the General Post Office (GPO) and some other buildings and waited for British responses. British troops came to the city and defeated the uprising with significant casualties to both sides and to civilians. One of the rebel leaders, Patrick Pearse, had publicly announced at the beginning of the Dublin uprising the creation of an Irish Republic. Its existence was short-lived since, after a few days of combat, the rebels surrendered before the end of the week.⁴² Their military action had failed completely in the short term.⁴³ Almost immediately after the surrender the British Army began to execute some rebel leaders. One of them, James Connolly, was not even mobile. So, they strapped him to a chair, lined him against a wall, and shot and killed him. Leaders of the British government quickly realized the lack of wisdom by Army leaders in ordering these executions and the government stopped them⁴⁴ after they had reached sixteen.⁴⁵ Those executions greatly increased the Irish people's hostility to British rule. Meanwhile, off to prisons went the rest of the captured rebels.

The Easter 1916 activity by the Irish rebels was a military disaster. Yet it soon began to be viewed by some Irish as a political event of consequence. Today the Easter uprising is often treated mythically⁴⁶ in Ireland.

Collins participated in the Dublin uprising and surrender.⁴⁷ He had been only a minor player in the fighting. Nevertheless, he went to prison where his life began to change, as the Dublin Irish noticed him there and his advance towards leadership was about to begin.

The prisoners of the Easter uprising were taken to jails in Britain. It was there that Collins began to receive attention from Irish leaders and fighters imprisoned with him. At first, he showed his talents in managing the needs of many prisoners and getting practical things done.⁴⁸ At Frongoch Camp in Wales, where he spent most of this imprisonment, he established a good working relationship with the younger group, less so with older men and moderates.⁴⁹ Collins had become very outspoken about his views and the direction in which the uprising should continue.⁵⁰ His voice was being heard in quarters that mattered. He had been known as a member of the London Irish but now was being identified as the outspoken man from County Cork. On December 21, 1916, the British declared an amnesty of prisoners from the Dublin uprising.⁵¹ Once discharged, Collins was back in Dublin on Christmas Day⁵² and then returned to his family's home in Cork.⁵³ Collins noticed the reaction to the uprising by the country people writing that the degree of prosperity the war in France had brought to them "has ruined them."⁵⁴ His attitude would later change. After spending about three weeks in Cork, he

returned to Dublin to enter the next phase of his life. His 1917 activities were about to start.

In February 1917 he was hired as Secretary of the Irish National Aid and Volunteer Dependents Fund (commonly called National Aid). This was a charitable organization designed to help those who suffered for participating in the Dublin uprising. It was considered a “respectable” organization funded by prominent people of nationalistic sympathies but not suspected of revolutionary sympathies.⁵⁵ Contributions from the United States were its primary source.⁵⁶

While the pay Collins received for this work was very modest, he thrived in this new position. He kept the books and scrupulously maintained them, handled the banking and investments, audited the clients, and churned out the correspondence. He never lost a file and never missed an appointment, especially in nationalistic circles.⁵⁷ His attention to those who came to National Aid for assistance was formidable. He met cases of genuine hardship with immediate understanding.⁵⁸ As a result of these activities, his name and talents quickly became known to an increasing number of the Irish.⁵⁹ He also had developed a manner tending to be brusque, as patience was not one of his strengths. This characteristic was troublesome to certain older members of the independence movement with whom he dealt. Many young men, however,

appreciated this part of his personality and gravitated towards him. Collins could fairly be described now as a firebrand, while still a recognized presence in the independence movement.⁶⁰

Political activity among the Irish seeking independence from Britain resumed in 1917. Collins was active in some of those efforts. While there were several formal and informal groups in which he was so engaged, none were more important to his work than the IRB and Sinn Fein.⁶¹

Collins had been regularly active in IRB activities during his 1916 imprisonment. That work led to the establishment of a permanent Supreme Council. He became secretary of the IRB Council.⁶² The primary work of the IRB was to manage military activities.

Sinn Fein ("Ourselves Alone") was a political party founded in 1905 by Arthur Griffith, a journalist. His paper was called *Nationality*. The public thought highly of Griffith, not least because he chose to live in poverty in Ireland for most of his life rather than pursuing a lucrative career in journalism in America.⁶³ Sinn Fein began to receive support throughout Ireland, as many Irish were drawn to its early messages.

Eamon de Valera, a veteran of the Dublin uprising and the only leader not executed, was an emerging leader in the independence movement.⁶⁴ De

Valera was elected President of Sinn Fein in 1917.⁶⁵ Griffith who had served as its president stepped down in favor of the younger man. De Valera, ten years older than Collins, soon came to be viewed as the political leader of the independence movement.

Alliances were born and discarded between and among the many groups and their leaders as conduct of the oncoming rebellion grew or faded away.⁶⁶ In time Collins's alliance with Griffith became one of the main reasons the Anglo-Irish War ended in December 1921 and a peace treaty was reached. It was a case of two strong-willed Irishmen and the independence moment coming together. The situation between Collins and de Valera, especially later, was different. However, as between de Valera and Griffith, one of Collins's biographers summed up the relationship this way: "Griffith wanted influence, de Valera wanted power."⁶⁷

Collins soon emerged from the groups of independence movement leaders as a man primarily committed to action with guns, not to a solution through the political or electoral process. Violence was the centerpiece of his program. The actions he urged were directed to the early violent overthrow of British rule. He did not believe a negotiated solution was achievable at that time.⁶⁸

In a further effort in 1917 to bring the two sides of the anti-British movements closer, de Valera was also elected President of the Volunteers.⁶⁹ This further reflected his growing importance in the independence movement. However, neither wing of the two movements was controlled by the other.⁷⁰ Given his commitment to violent action Collins was sometimes “disgusted at what appeared to him [to be] a highly undesirable preponderance of the cautious minded in the political field.”⁷¹ Collins was in fact a plain-speaking country boy. His time in handling the political field as a major player would not start in earnest until the negotiation in London in late 1921 which led to the peace treaty.

In expanding his efforts in the battle for independence following his release from imprisonment and the end of his work as Secretary of National Aid, Collins engaged in both violent and non-violent activities. They are (1) his work in developing a highly effective intelligence network, (2) his work in managing a national fundraising to support the rebellion’s financing, and (3) his efforts in helping render ineffective the work of the British controlled Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) throughout the country.

First, the British had long helped control the Irish people through the activities of the detective services based in Dublin Castle and nearby facilities. It was from these places that Britain sought, particularly through

the G Division of the detective service which monitored all nationalist movements, to keep control over political activities in Ireland. The G Division conducted surveillance of rail stations, hotels, and the port areas, handled street informers, and apprehended and interrogated those suspected of involvement in subversive or illegal political activity.⁷²

Many detectives in G Division were Irish and their loyalty to British rule was questionable. Several of the detectives reached out to Irishmen who were opposing British rule. They soon found Collins who immediately accepted their cooperation.⁷³ Beyond those detectives, he also began to receive confidential British information from women working in Dublin Castle clerical positions. They were in receipt of information about action the British planned to take, as well as the identities of informers who reported to the British. The detectives and the women were steadfastly loyal to the causes advanced by Collins, to those who acted for Collins, and frankly to Collins himself. He put what they gave him to effective use. Those working in G Division and in Dublin Castle who were drawn to Collins admired what he did. The British in positions of authority failed to halt the flow of information the detectives and staff gave Collins, not realizing the sources of his information.⁷⁴ He also chose to keep his sources confidential from those working in the political front of the conflict.

Collins did not limit his intelligence activities to the work he did with detectives from G Division. He created a full-time intelligence section which reported to him, and which established projects running from the creation of safe houses to the penetration of other parts of the British government's presence in Ireland.⁷⁵ Given his success Collins has been accurately recognized as "an unlikely intelligence mastermind."⁷⁶

Second, revolutions need financial support. Collins managed a program to raise funds for the movement through the issuance of bonds. It fell to Collins in 1919 to prepare a prospectus for a national interest-bearing Loan to support the Irish nation not recognized by the British.⁷⁷ The British immediately prevented any advertisement of that program. Collins found other effective and imaginative ways to let the public know of this investment opportunity. One way was to have a public meeting announcing the existence of the loan program. He attended that first meeting even though he was by then a wanted man. He made the first purchase spending twenty-five pounds of his own money. That was a substantial outlay for him.⁷⁸ Another way to support the loan was to have Sinn Fein members go to local cinemas and show pictures of the Bond Certificates on the movie screens, then to depart quickly before the police could arrive.⁷⁹ Collins supervised other ways of delivering the message. As a result, money began to pour in. Gold was also accepted as

payment. Collins eventually was to raise in Ireland more than the 250,000 pounds he had promised would be raised. Griffith, who was doubtful the bond program should even be attempted later described it as “one of the most extraordinary feats in the country’s history.”⁸⁰

Third, the RIC had the task of maintaining order in Ireland outside of Dublin. The RIC had an authorized strength of 10,000 men. They were based in armed barracks around the country. One of RIC’s tasks was to provide Dublin Castle⁸¹ with reliable information about local affairs.⁸² They were Britain’s first line of defense inside Ireland.⁸³ Collins understood that breaking RIC power throughout the country would seriously weaken Britain’s ability to maintain control over the Irish citizenry.

The decision to take offensive action against specific police stations was made by local Volunteer commanders.⁸⁴ Collins planned the integration of these widely scattered bands. In time they became formal groups working under his direction.⁸⁵ Faced with this threat of violence (and in many cases, the reality) many of the RIC rank and file soon began to lose interest in defending British positions against their countrymen. Declining resistance by the RIC in 1918 to Volunteer raids on their barracks began to yield weapons and ammunition stored there. They were turned over to the Irish independence forces. By 1919 most RIC rank and file resistance to attacks on

their barracks and the capture of weapons stored there had faded away. The British were left to replace those forces with British paramilitary personnel. They were called the Black and Tan and were supplemented later by other British personnel called Auxiliaries. At this time the British had become aware of Collins, and they started to seek him out.⁸⁶ As the year wore on, Collins became aware of the hunt for him. By 1919 Collins was recognized as a leader both in urging and taking action designed to produce independence. He did not participate in a primary way in how Sinn Fein developed the independence effort on the political front, leaving that to others.

The following is a brief description of the major political developments at that time. Sinn Fein began to elect its candidates to the Parliament at Westminster. This occurred at first during a small number of by-elections. Finally, in December 1918, shortly after the Armistice had ended World War I combat, there was a general election throughout Britain and Ireland. Sinn Fein candidates from Ireland triumphed winning seventy-three of the 103 Irish seats in the House of Commons.⁸⁷ They almost swept the island's field in that election.⁸⁸ However, they chose not to serve as members of Parliament. Instead, they decided in January 1919 "to convoke the Dail Erieanne" ("Assembly of Ireland") as Ireland's national assembly⁸⁹ although Collins opposed this decision.⁹⁰ By this time many of the Irish urging independence

began describing themselves as Republicans. Collins was elected to the Dail and appointed to the Cabinet as Minister of Home Affairs.⁹¹ He would soon receive additional appointments as Minister for Finance and Director of Intelligence.

4. 1920: Year of Terror

The British government elected not to negotiate with the Dail. Instead in September 1919 it declared that the Dail was an illegal organization.⁹² Armed conflict in a guerilla struggle between Irish and British forces became the primary way the two sides began to deal with the other. 1920 became known as the Year of Terror. That was the situation until late in 1921 when negotiations had started between the highest members of the British government and a selected group of Irishmen acting on behalf of what came to be known as the Irish Free State.

Arguments raged about which side was responsible for what came to be known as the Anglo-Irish War. Both sides described the conduct of the other in the expanding guerilla war as murder.⁹³ Claims have long been made in times of wars and insurrections that killings were only being done to ensure a just result would be reached. Fairness, however, compels a conclusion today that the two sides in this struggle were regularly engaged in murder. Often

those killed were targeted subjects. But innocent people on both sides were also killed because those directing this war could not or did not try to exercise sufficient control of their gunmen. In fact, what the killings in this war seemed to accomplish was to bring exhaustion to the continued will to fight.

It is clear Collins put his talents to work in directing many of the killings by the Irish forces. He was mindful that murder was wrong and appears to have agonized about specific killings on some occasions when they were done at his direction or with his approval.⁹⁴ Yet he clearly believed Ireland had a right to be a free nation. He justified his approvals in part because he believed the British were engaged in murder in their efforts to continue to maintain control over the Irish people. Collins later wrote that the murders of which the Irish rebels were accused “were the legitimate acts of self-defense which had been forced upon the Irish people by English aggression.”⁹⁵ He once told a reporter for a British newspaper: “There is no crime in detecting and destroying, in war time, the spy and the informer.”⁹⁶

As in so many wars and insurrections, killings of combatants and innocent bystanders leave behind widows, orphans, heartbroken parents and other family members and friends. The passage of time often judges that those killings cannot be justified, especially compared to the actual results the wars achieved. The Anglo-Irish War was no different. 1920 was especially

bloodthirsty. Some comfort can be taken from the fact that the total killings in Ireland were only counted in the thousands. They did not reach the levels of the millions occurring in other revolutions.⁹⁷ The best estimate I have made of the total deaths, i.e., murders and executions by both sides, during the Anglo-Irish War and the Irish Civil War which followed is well under 10,000 and probably no more than 5,000.

Collins was always mindful of the limited number of men available to the rebel cause through most of the Anglo-Irish War. There was only so much fighting they could do. As to his numbers, he said, “there were not more than three thousand fighting men.”⁹⁸ There is no reason to question that figure. However, during 1920 the British Army and its paramilitary forces in Ireland fighting against the independent forces numbered around 75,000.⁹⁹ With those different numbers, Collins was justified in his conclusion in late 1921 that the Irish rebels could not expect to defeat the British in any extended form of combat.

The texts identified in this paper have reviewed in detail the bloodthirsty fighting and killing in 1920. On the British side the RIC had been neutralized as an effective fighting force or a worthwhile intelligence service for the British.¹⁰⁰ It was replaced in fact, if not formally, by two groups of paramilitary groups. First was the Black and Tan,¹⁰¹ who began arriving in

Ireland in March 1920. They consisted of former servicemen, now unemployed, who unofficially were told they would have a free hand in making Ireland a “hell for rebels to live in.”¹⁰² They essentially acted as assassins and thugs, killed, or tortured suspected rebels, or those thought to be supporting them, and rendered a great deal of property damage. Their work alienated the Irish people who still maintained hostility from the deaths and mistreatment in the Great Famine.

The Black and Tan were soon supplemented by a British group identified as Auxiliaries. They were mostly ex-officers in the British Army. They were tough, ruthless, energetic, and courageous and were willing and able to use their weapons.¹⁰³ To these two forces were added members of the British Army. As the fighting expanded in 1920, the size of the forces Britain had stationed in Ireland grew. Among the tools they used to sustain their military positions were concentration camps, air raids and artillery bombardments.¹⁰⁴

On the Irish side Collins made primary use of a group called The Squad. They were unmarried young Irishmen chosen by Collins himself. They were full-time armed assassins ready to pounce whenever he gave the order. Through The Squad’s work with the gun, he was able to “build up for himself a name of fear such as no Irish leader had ever enjoyed.”¹⁰⁵

Next, with the effective destruction of the RIC and its reduction as a decisive police force,¹⁰⁶ groups of armed local Irish Volunteers (known as flying columns) came into being.¹⁰⁷ They waged war by killing people believed to be spies and informers for the British or who otherwise opposed the revolution. The flying columns were fifteen to twenty men in strength. They rarely fought in pitched battles. Instead, they staged ambushes of British forces and attacked the remaining RIC barracks. Aside from the work of The Squad much of the success on the Irish side resulted from Collins's control of the intelligence part of the war. That covered both his knowledge of the plans of the British and his ability to put that knowledge to work promptly on behalf of the revolution he was leading.

There was one event in 1920 directed by Collins which earned the name Bloody Sunday. Its effect on continuation of the rebellion by both sides was enormous. Collins concluded that a group of British intelligence agents known as the Cairo Gang was undermining his intelligence gathering efforts. Some of them were believed to also have carried out shootings in Dublin and were planning to assassinate the Irish Nationalist leadership.¹⁰⁸ Based on information from one of his female spies in Dublin Castle, he assigned The Squad to eliminate them. On Sunday morning November 21, 1920, at his direction, members of The Squad entered the buildings where Cairo Gang

members were living, shot, and killed twelve of them, wounding others.¹⁰⁹

Women were often present when these murders occurred. In a violent reprisal, British soldiers and some of their paramilitary forces entered a local stadium where a Gaelic football match was being played. They machine gunned the stands and the field, killing thirteen spectators and one player. Later that day British forces also killed a group of nine civilians picked at random off the street.¹¹⁰ These killings by both sides added to the hatred which helped drive the continuation of this war.

Efforts to reach a political solution during 1920 were for naught. But it was the time Collins had become the recognized leader of the military struggle. This leadership happened in large part because he was one of the few fighters still present or available in Ireland. The British had imprisoned most of Sinn Fein's leaders and de Valera had left Ireland to raise funds and gain support in the United States. He was to spend about twenty months there raising money for the cause of independence.¹¹¹ Back in Dublin, Collins had become the most active member of the rebellion.

De Valera only returned to Ireland in December 1920, when it soon became clear he and Collins did not agree on a growing number of matters about how best to achieve independence. Nonetheless, Collins would defer to

de Valera on many occasions in recognition of the fact that de Valera was the acknowledged leader of Sinn Fein.¹¹²

5. 1921. Approval of Anglo-Irish Treaty.

No matter how much blood was spilled on both sides, 1920 brought no solution to the war. As happens often in wars when battle fatigue and death counts come together efforts began in various ways to try to reach some solution. These many steps and the many battles and ambushes are adequately discussed in the texts cited. (The position of Ulster was obviously going to be a problem in any resolution and still is. In fact, it became a problem of the first order and will be discussed later.) Settlement probes made by the two sides finally led to meetings held in London between Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister, and de Valera. The two men met face to face four times in July 1921.¹¹³ No substantive agreement was reached, although de Valera had learned exactly what he could anticipate would be the British view when further negotiations would take place.

In advance of these July meetings the parties had agreed upon a temporary truce in the fighting and killing which became effective on July 11, 1921.¹¹⁴ The terms of the truce were favorable to the Irish side. The Irish were not required to turn over their weapons and were allowed to continue their

military training. The truce was honored by both sides for the most part. The parties also agreed to continue negotiations in October in London.

The most important development about the continuation of settlement discussions with the British was de Valera's decision that he would not attend these negotiations. He made it clear back in Dublin he personally would not agree to any settlement which did not incorporate the points he wanted starting with his insistence that Ireland be acknowledged to be a republic. His duty as a leader required that he consider what the Irish people wanted to achieve from negotiations, not what he believed the people should want. By any test, his decision to stay away from further face to face negotiations, or to try later to limit the power of the designated Irish negotiators in any manner,¹¹⁵ was irresponsible.¹¹⁶ Principles of leadership should have compelled de Valera to deal personally with the decision makers for the other side or let his negotiators make the best agreement which could be reached. He had already spent parts of four days in negotiations with the British Prime Minister, one on one.¹¹⁷ The continued negotiations were to try to end over seven hundred years of British control of Ireland in a war taking lives and destroying property in substantial numbers. The British were represented by its Prime Minister and significant members of his cabinet.¹¹⁸ The Irish thus would be dealing with the enemy's major decision makers in the Anglo-Irish War. His

duty was to be there and not to send plenipotentiaries who did not have the power to reach the best available agreement for the people of Ireland.

De Valera's correspondence to the British Prime Minister after their July meetings is instructive. There does not appear to include any advice to the British that he wanted whatever decision the Irish negotiators might reach in London would somehow require his personal approval. The thrust of his correspondence to the Prime Minister was to the contrary. For example, consider the following words de Valera chose to use:

August 10, 1921. "It must, of course, be understood that all treaties and agreements would have to be submitted for ratification to the national legislature in the first instance [the British Parliament and the Irish Dail] and subsequently to the Irish people as a whole"¹¹⁹

That is exactly what was done after the Treaty was signed. De Valera's efforts in January 1922 to prevent the Treaty from being approved by the full Dail is contrary to what he wrote. In fact, both legislatures did approve the Treaty in 1922. The Treaty was then submitted to the Irish people at a vote held in July 1921 and was overwhelmingly approved by them.

August 24, 1921. "Dail Eireann is ready to appoint its representatives, and ... to invest them with plenary powers to meet and arrange with you for its application in detail."¹²⁰

De Valera had made efforts in his correspondence with Lloyd George, and in his July meetings with him, to have Britain acknowledge the existence of an Irish Republic. Britain refused to do so. The Prime Minister instead wrote to de Valera that the Irish delegates would be viewed as "spokesmen of the people whom you represent."¹²¹ That was as far as Britain would go before settlement negotiations resumed in October. Much as he disliked this arrangement, and by any test required in serious negotiations, de Valera agreed negotiations would resume on those terms.¹²²

On September 14, 1921, the Dail met in private session and ratified five men to serve as plenipotentiaries¹²³ to represent the nation's interest at the next sessions of the negotiations.¹²⁴ They were Griffith, Vice President of Dail, who was designated as Chairman, Collins, who then served as Minister of Finance, and three others. They were Robert Barton (Minister for Economic Affairs), Eamon Duggan (a Dail Deputy), and George Duffy (also a Dail Deputy).

On the British side its representatives were cabinet members from the World War I coalition government still in power. It included Prime Minister Lloyd George who “believed in the paramount necessity of settling the Irish question... [but] the feelings of the Irish people were only one element in the problem.”¹²⁵ The other major participants for Britain were Winston Churchill, Lord Birkenhead, and Austen Chamberlain. Churchill, then Secretary of State for War and Air, would go on in the following year to have a key role in the ongoing relationship between Ireland and Britain. In a memo Collins had prepared in advance of the negotiations he had evaluated Churchill as follows: “Full of ex-officer jingo or similar outlook. Don’t actually trust him.”¹²⁶ Time changed that evaluation. Birkenhead was Lord Chancellor, Britain’s senior legal official, and soon won the confidence of Collins once negotiations started. The mutual understanding of these two men was crucial to the success of the conference.¹²⁷ Chamberlain, Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the British Conservative Party, worked closely with the Irish delegates and said on the last evening of negotiations after Griffith had stated he would sign the Treaty: “A braver man than Arthur Griffith I have never met.”¹²⁸

Collins told de Valera he was a soldier, not a politician, and should not be a delegate. Griffith agreed that Collins should not go but the other three

members of the delegation sided with de Valera's decision.¹²⁹ Collins appreciated that he was going to be set up as a scapegoat if the negotiation, among other things, rejected the Irish demand to be recognized as a Republic or failed to accept de Valera's idea of some "External Association" between the two nations instead of identification as a Dominion. However, de Valera was unwilling to go to London to fight for those positions himself. This conduct was the opposite of what reasonable people should expect from their leader.¹³⁰

Various explanations have been offered for de Valera's conduct, either by him or someone advancing his position. None of them had sufficient merit.¹³¹ Of further significance is that his decision contributed in a major way to the killing of Collins the following year. While that was not de Valera's intent in refusing to attend the negotiations sessions, it was one of the results of his decision.

Collins, who understood what leadership required, agreed to be part of the delegation. He and Griffith then agreed Collins would be the de facto leader of the Irish delegation. Years of overwork by Griffith, coupled with his poverty, strain, poor health and several imprisonments, had taken a toll on his energy.¹³² In less than one year Griffith was to die from a brain hemorrhage.¹³³

What do we know about Collins' personal life, his talents, and interests as he was preparing to leave for the Treaty negotiations in London? Without question, young though he was, he had become the recognized leader of the military side of the Irish rebellion. He had also gained a reputation for being an effective leader and administrator, positions he deeply desired.

His private life, however, was limited. The British hunt to catch and kill or imprison him was becoming more intense. Thus, he started to spend his nights wherever a safe place could be found. It was not a stable life. He continued his practice of getting around Dublin without some form of disguise. He used a bicycle to travel around the city believing that if he dressed as an ordinary businessman, he would be ignored by British forces searching to apprehend him which turned out to be the case.

Historians and biographers have offered interesting analyses of Collins's relations with the people with whom he dealt at this time. The one who captures Collins best is Frank O'Connor, who wrote that Collins, aside from his many gifts and talents, "was a very ordinary man; one might even say he was a conventional man. His ideals were genuine, but they were simple.... he was not lawless; he had far too much of the country boy's respect for what people thought."¹³⁴ To this O'Connor added: "His enemies knew Collins' weakness to be his absolutely selfless loyalty, and played on it."¹³⁵

These characteristics were central to the decisions he made in London and in the Irish Civil War which followed.

At this time, an important new figure had entered Collins's life. She was Kitty Kiernan, a member of a highly respected family in County Longford which maintained a small hotel and store there.¹³⁶ Kitty and her sisters had personality and position in the local community, as well as a fashion sense widely recognized.¹³⁷ She "was a girl of his own people, brought up in the Irish way of life."¹³⁸

At some point Collins and Kitty began to correspond with each other. History is fortunate that Kitty maintained copies of much of what they wrote to each other; their letters numbered about three hundred. To read those letters leads to only one conclusion: they loved each other. They are love letters in the best sense of the word. They are dated from 1919 to a week before he was killed in August 1922. The editor of those letters for their eventual publication concluded that the letters Collins wrote "do not conceal his affection for her, his concern for her health, his eager anticipation of her becoming his wife. He was a lover of children... and would have loved to have a family of his own."¹³⁹ The two were formally engaged to be married in 1922 after the Treaty had been signed.

As he was preparing to attend the London conference, Collins knew his ability to continue hiding from British forces pursuing him was about to end. His photo would be taken in London and widely circulated. His successful efforts to avoid those chasing him without a useful photo would be at an end. With all these conditions in mind, Collins, the soldier, was about to begin negotiating directly with the leaders of his enemy, but now as a politician. Until then, they only recognized him as the head of an Irish murder gang.

The negotiations lasted about two months (October 11, 1921 to December 6, 1921).¹⁴⁰ The first five meetings were plenary. They provided the two sides the opportunity to make their wishes known and why those wishes should be honored in a Treaty.¹⁴¹ Twenty-four subcommittee meetings were then held, attended by Griffith and Collins.¹⁴² Collins was the only Irish delegate to handle meetings on finance and defense. He returned to Dublin most weekends to report to the Dail Cabinet where the parties stood. The day-to-day negotiations have been comprehensively captured in Pakenham's "Peace By Ordeal." Therefore, they will not be reviewed here on their day-to-day level. Instead, as negotiations developed, civility reigned, serious positions were advanced on both sides, and agreements were reached on several matters in the sub-committees' subjects. Two issues, however, became prominent.¹⁴³ They required resolution before a Treaty could be signed. They

can be summarized as involving Ulster and symbols of British government in Ireland.

Ulster. The Irish delegates hoped to negotiate a treaty which would cover the population of the entire island, not just those in the 26 counties in the South. The fact, however, is that differences between Protestants and Catholics in Ulster “were more than simply political: in their social complexity they amounted to two distinct cultural systems.”¹⁴⁴ Even so, efforts were made during the London negotiations to persuade the Ulster government to reach some agreement with Griffith and Collins which could be incorporated into a Treaty. Lloyd George tried and failed to persuade Ulster’s Premier, Sir James Craig, to come to the London bargaining table or otherwise bind Ulster to agreements reached with the Griffith-Collins group.¹⁴⁵ Despite arguments why that would be a sensible resolution, and despite the willingness of Britain to lose substantial control over Ulster if that could be arranged, it was not to be. Today, more than a century has passed since those efforts were made. Still, Ulster remains part of Great Britain, not of Ireland. The reason is simple: most of the people of Northern Island did not then want that change to happen.

Griffith and Collins were urging a democratic solution based on the will of the people of the South, it is interesting to reflect on the arguments

advanced by Lloyd George and Churchill, and by Griffith and Collins, during negotiations. They all advanced commercial reasons why the people of Ulster would be beneficiaries of an arrangement bringing all of Ireland under one government. At the end of the day, however, it is the will of the people, not the needs of others in the negotiations, which should control the outcome.¹⁴⁶ The majority of the people in Ulster did not want to be part of the government of the twenty-six counties. Eventually the Ulster issues faded into the background in the London discussions. The two parties had realized they could not compel Ulster to participate in the Treaty.

What did remain of the Ulster issue, however, was whether there could be any adjustment of the border between Northern Ireland and the twenty-six counties. The Treaty provided that could occur but did not mandate that it happen. Britain had the power to do so since Northern Island remained part of Great Britain, subject to its power. The Treaty in fact created a Boundary Commission to do just that.¹⁴⁷ No such boundary adjustments have been made.¹⁴⁸ That resolution was very unpopular to leaders of the twenty-six counties.

Symbols of British power in Ireland. More than 100 years after the Treaty was signed, it is difficult to appreciate why this was once an issue. It can be explained, at least in part, due to the stubbornness and egos of some of

the rebels and some of the British, especially those not at the negotiating table, as well as to their antagonism to any shadow of British rule.¹⁴⁹ What mattered was the determination of Griffith and Collins to bring the Anglo-Irish War to an end, to secure Ireland's independence from Britain, and to end the bloodshed and suffering sustained over the centuries.

What were these symbols? First, it was Britain's insistence that Ireland be recognized as part of the British Commonwealth as a Dominion, not as an independent Republic. The claim of an Irish Republic had been declared on the first day of the 1916 Dublin uprising. Second, the Treaty was to contain, per Britain's insistence, a loyalty oath to the British King by those elected to the new Irish Parliament.

Other symbols of Irish participation in the British government were also required. It became clear during the negotiations that these symbols would not include any power whatsoever over how the people in the twenty-six counties governed themselves. In other words, whatever the British government did or chose not to do in Ireland had no power over the people of the South and its new government. The negotiations now had been reduced to the difference between form and substance. The Irish delegates had unequivocally prevailed on the larger issues that mattered: the British government would leave the South altogether with its Army; the Anglo-Irish

War would be over; Britain's 700-year control of most of Ireland was ended. Griffith and Collins had done what leaders do.

The matters which leaders of the now Sinn Fein controlled government wanted their negotiators to advance in London were vigorously advanced there.¹⁵⁰ Again and again, they were rejected by the British.¹⁵¹ In time Collins and Churchill began to develop a good working relationship; that helped the parties reach the ultimate agreement.¹⁵² Finally on December 5, 1921, Lloyd George announced that negotiations had reached an end, that the Irish delegation would have to sign the Treaty that day or the conference would be over. He made clear he had no additional points on which to compromise. Second guessers back in Ireland have since argued that he would have given more if the Irish delegation continued to talk. There is no credible evidence to support that claim. In any case, it would have been irresponsible for the negotiators to bring the gun back into the Anglo-Irish War and to add to the tally of dead Irishmen and Englishmen to test the determination of the two parties.

Collins, who had maintained silence on many points, announced his position on the ultimatum during a taxi ride back to the place where the Irish were staying. He said he would sign the Treaty and had concluded that Lloyd George was not bluffing, and that the Treaty gave the Irish most of what they

sought to achieve. The rest – matters of form and words only - would come in time for Ireland and did. Returning to 10 Downing Street, he signed the Treaty early in the morning of December 6. All the other Irish plenipotentiaries also signed the Treaty. (See Appendix.)

Collins was mindful of a position de Valera had taken: the plenipotentiaries should not sign anything until he reviewed it. It had become obvious by then that de Valera would disapprove if the treaty did not include everything he wanted. Collins decided to sign an agreement he believed was a great result for the people of Ireland. It was consistent with his duty as his nation's designated plenipotentiary to reach the best agreement possible.

The alternative was to withhold his signature so that de Valera back in Dublin could deny approval before the question would even go to the Dail and then to the people of Ireland for their decisions. All this would have to be done in the expectation the British would continue negotiating, that the truce would remain in place and that violent deaths would not resume. That expectation was a dream, one which responsible leaders should not impose on their citizens. Collins had done what good leaders should do when confronted with the Prime Minister's ultimatum.

Convinced that the proposed Treaty was a triumph for Ireland's actual long-term interest, aware that it would not become effective unless approved by the Dail and then by the people of the South, convinced that Britain had offered its final position, convinced that the war and killing was about to resume and that Ireland was militarily weak with tragic consequences awaiting it upon resumption of fighting, he did what strong leaders do. He decided; he did not temporize. The country boy embraced the common sense solution. After all, he was a plenipotentiary. It was the right decision. He would not let the acceptance of the draft Treaty wait another day.

The delegation's approval of the Treaty was promptly announced.¹⁵³ It was met with overwhelming approval by the public, the press,¹⁵⁴ and the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland.¹⁵⁵ He returned to Dublin to participate in the Dail's review of the Treaty.

Despite the manifest approval by the people of Ireland, in December 1921 de Valera then began to lead the opposition to acceptance of the Treaty. He was supported by the second guessers, by those who did not like Collins individually, by those who could not accept an agreement in which the British had not recognized an Irish Republic, by those who were prepared to have Irish blood spilled again in the resumption of the Anglo-Irish War, and by those who could not or would not realize the Treaty provided Ireland all

matters of real consequence many Irishmen had died in pursuing over the years. In short, the antitreaty forces had embraced fighting for form over substance.

The Dail debate lasted for several days before a recess was taken before Christmas. Collins spoke in terms both eloquent and simple. As to what his designated negotiators had secured, de Valera advanced every available argument why they had not achieved enough. De Valera's supporters were unrestrained in attacking the Treaty. There is an old expression that someone "got his Irish up." It commonly means going into a rage when a person has not had his way, has lost self-control, and may say anything. Some of the anti-Treaty remarks fell in that category.¹⁵⁶ And they included personal attacks on Collins. In a way these anti-Treaty comments were the actual beginning of the Irish Civil War which was to start in a few months.

In discussing the pro-British symbols included in the Treaty, Collins made the point that the Treaty was the strong beginning of complete irreversible Irish independence from Britain. He advanced the point that the British would shortly be gone from Ireland, as the Irish people had long sought, and that in time the symbols would also be gone. Ireland was now about to become an independent country. As he later wrote: "There is a simple test. Those who are left in possession of the battlefield have won."¹⁵⁷

At these times, however, Collins realized that Irish unity under which he had long fought was lost. Given his personality, and his loyalty to all those with whom he had worked to gain independence, this loss was almost intolerable for the country boy Collins was.

The Dail vote was taken in January 1922. It was 64 to 47 in favor of the Treaty. That was a 57% majority.¹⁵⁸ The people of Ireland through their elected representatives had made their decision. The Irish voters themselves overwhelmingly and directly reaffirmed this decision later in 1922 when they elected their new Parliament.¹⁵⁹ Collins, Griffith, and the pro-Treaty forces had prevailed.

During his lifetime Collins never published a book. After his death, a collection of materials he had written was published under the title "A Path to Freedom" and "The Path to Freedom." They appear to be identical save for the fact that the latter publication contains a Publisher's Note that the materials had been drafted by Collins for public utterance. They were published in their uncorrected form and bear the date of August 1922.

The first concern about any such materials is whether Collins wrote them. It seems clear he did. The style is the same he used in his many handwritten letters to Kitty Kiernan. It is reasonable to conclude that much of

the material is what he used in speaking to the Dail and others in urging adoption of the Treaty. They are very direct in their explanations of the several subject matters.¹⁶⁰ The writings thus are worth attention as to what he believed, why he believed it and why he did what he did.

Much of the material collected in *A Path to Freedom* reflects action taken in Ireland in 1922 after the Treaty was signed. It is a solid collection of the many points he advanced in his speech to the Dail urging acceptance of the Treaty, as well as in his many remarks to various groups of Irish citizens. He handles the criticisms advanced by de Valera in a direct manner, writing “The policy of the Anti-Treaty Party had now become clear – to prevent the people’s will from being carried out because it differed from their own...”¹⁶¹ And throughout the paper he made clear that, for the Irish to prevail “required only common sense and patriotism.”¹⁶²

6. 1922: Irish Civil War.

Collins now moved into the next phase of his leadership with the formation of a new government,¹⁶³ freed from any control by the British government. De Valera resigned from his position as President of the Dail. The Dail chose Griffith to succeed him. A detailed discussion of how the new Provisional Government in Ireland went about its duties during 1922 is

beyond the scope of this paper. Instead, a review of post-Treaty approval activities will be limited to the efforts by Collins: (1) to keep the anti-Treaty forces as part of a provisional government of a united Irish Free State and establish its constitution; and (2) to examine his work in the Irish Civil War which was about to start. (In truth, of course, these two matters are part of the same issue.) In the first activity he failed to bring the anti-Treaty forces into working together with the new Irish government. In the second activity he kept the agreements Ireland had made in the Treaty and effectively broke the back of the rebel forces. That soon led to the end of the Civil War in 1923 which the new Irish Free State prevailed.

Why did Collins fail in his effort to neutralize the anti-Treaty forces?

The reason was simple: those forces did not want to be neutralized. They were beyond his powers of persuasion or reason. Ireland had now moved into a new political world. The political battles were between and among Irish people and organizations. It was now a nation with internal disputes among its citizens. They needed to be resolved. With the centuries-long struggles with Britain now settled, Collins thought, or at least hoped, co-operation among many of the Irish would continue. He was wrong. De Valera was a more effective politician at first than Collins. For example, he was able to persuade Collins to agree to an extension of the elections set for voting for seats in the Dail. That

would be the Irish people's chance to be counted on the Treaty. Collins failed to understand, or refused to understand, that de Valera and the forces he represented had only one mission. It was to disavow the Treaty and overturn the clear majority decision most of the Irish people had made to accept the Treaty. There was no solution available to Collins through any form of delay. It was a matter of who was in control. It was power politics, plain and simple. Collins was temporarily outmaneuvered by de Valera in a fight he did not want to fight. The soldier lost to the politician, at least for a while, over the Treaty he knew was in the best interests of the people of Ireland.

Second, Collins was soon freed from the agony of continuing to attempt to persuade the anti-Treaty forces to join the majority of the Irish in creating their new government.¹⁶⁴ Dissatisfied with their unsuccessful political efforts, some of the anti-Treaty forces took action (soon to become violent action) to see if they could prevail that way in the ongoing struggle.

Thus, on April 13, 1922, a group of Republicans seized the Four Courts in Dublin as their headquarters and proceeded to fortify them.¹⁶⁵ The Four Courts were the seat of the country's highest judicial tribunals.¹⁶⁶ Those occupying the Four Courts made clear they were taking action to achieve control of the new Irish government. The Provisional Government created under the Treaty responded at first by having its military forces occupy

nearby buildings.¹⁶⁷ The British made clear they viewed the actions of the anti-Treaty forces to be a breach of the treaty. They looked to the Provisional Government to resolve the crisis. Meanwhile the Republicans (the name the anti-Treaty forces were using) also took military action in Ulster territory. Efforts to settle these disputes all failed. Finally on June 28, 1922, the British issued an ultimatum to the Provisional Government: you clear the Four Quarters, or we will send our troops there and do it ourselves. Collins, determined to preserve the independence of the Irish nation for which he had been fighting since the 1916 Dublin uprising, started a military assault of the Four Quarters.¹⁶⁸ Following serious bloodshed and loss of life, the rebels were defeated. The Four Courts were captured, and the Irish Civil War was upon the nation.

The Irish were now at war with the Irish, only a half year since the Irish Free State had come into existence. Civil war raged for about one year. The Republicans in the end were no match for the Army of the Irish Free State. They lost all battles of consequence and laid down their arms in 1923. The deaths of the pro-Treaty military forces were estimated to be around 800 soldiers.¹⁶⁹ That number is high. One Irish Civil War death on the Provisional Government's side, however, stood out. Collins had become commander-in-chief of what was now known as the National Army. This Army was now in

uniform and seeking to project its authority throughout the land. Collins was present everywhere where combat occurred or was expected even though his duties did not require that level of activity. On August 22, 1922, while riding in a convoy in Cook County, Republican fighters ambushed the convoy.

Collins was riding in a military patrol and was shot in the head, the ricochet of a bullet fired by one of the ambushers. He did not survive the day. His body was taken to Dublin. Aware of who they had lost, the people of Ireland turned out by the hundreds of thousands for his funeral.¹⁷⁰ Their realization of what had happened was summed up in the words of one old woman, black-shawled, who passed by his coffin saying "Michael Collins, Michael Collins, why did you leave us?"¹⁷¹ The Big Fellow was gone. The free nation he helped establish lives on.¹⁷²

7. Conclusion

Henry Kissinger has recently written about leadership among some prominent twentieth century figures.¹⁷³ He identifies two types: the statesman and the prophet. The statesman both must preserve the society in which he or she works and to temper his or her vision with wariness. His or her work is primarily managerial. Collins met that test through the work he did in keeping the Irish revolutionary course on track, despite powerful military and paramilitary opposition from Britain and a good deal of uncooperative

activity from other Irishmen fighting the revolution.¹⁷⁴ As to the prophet, Collins redefined what was possible both while the Anglo-Irish War and the Irish Civil War were being waged. Recognized as the lead figure in the revolution, he held everything together.¹⁷⁵

In evaluating what Michael Collins did for Ireland two matters stand out.¹⁷⁶ First, there is his work in helping to reach the end of the Anglo-Irish War and signing the Treaty. He and his fellow fighters ended over seven hundred years of British rule. The British government over Ireland ceased to exist almost immediately. Its Army, long an occupier, was gone. He had spent two months negotiating with British officials who originally looked upon him as a leader of a murder gang. He lacked their education and training. He was only the youngest son of a farmer. Even so limited, he exercised his leadership and talents to understand what the battle required, and to bring an end to a terrible war. He won freedom for his fellow Irishmen. He did so aware that some of his countrymen had found his effort insufficient. The Big Fellow paid with his life. The life he hoped to live with Kitty was never to be.

When he endeavored to persuade the anti-Treaty forces to join with him and most of his fellow countrymen in establishing a new government, he failed. He was not cut out for that effort at that time. He had experienced too much trust for too long for those who became his opponents within Ireland,

especially de Valera. Collins was a fighter and a good country boy who loved and trusted some of his countrymen too much. The Irish Civil War now awaited him.

His second aspect of great leadership was to do all that could be done to honor Ireland's commitment to the terms of the Treaty against enormous resistance. That is what he knew a great country is expected to do.¹⁷⁷ He believed Ireland was a great country. Then, he entered the Irish Civil War to win it. All that is what was required of a leader.

It is proper in making these leadership evaluations to consider the sacrifices he made for his country. First, he gave his life. Second, he lived for several years during the Anglo-Irish War hunted by the British and concerned whether he would live to see the next day. Third, because of the full-time nature of the work he did, he did not have a real opportunity to marry Kitty so the two of them could create a family. His sacrifices were as great as any patriot who fought in the Anglo-Irish War or in the Irish Civil War which followed. He did so because Collins was a great leader.

¹ Ulster in this paper means the six counties in Northern Ireland. Today they remain part of Great Britain. The terms "Belfast" and "Northern Island" mean the same thing in this paper.

² Today the reunification of Northern island and the Republic is much nearer reality than at any previous time.

³ There are at least five biographies of Collins which deserve serious attention. While they are not panegyrics, they all appear to rest upon solid evidence and to reach sensible conclusions about Collins's life and his place in European history. They all conclude that his work in large part made a positive contribution to modern Irish history. First, there is Frank O'Connor, a renowned writer of short stories and the best known of the biographers.

He published **The Big Fellow: Michael Collins & The Irish Revolution** in 1937. It is noteworthy because O'Connor, as a young man, had joined the anti-Treaty cause in the 1920s. O'Connor opposed Collins's efforts to have the newly established Irish nation honor the obligations imposed by the Treaty. O'Connor observed that there were three qualities which marked Collins's life: humor; passionate tenderness; and a fiery temper. O'Connor stated he was writing of Collins as the realist he was. Second, Tim Pat Coogan, a journalist and well-known historian of Irish matters, collected a great deal of detail about the subject's life in his 1990 **Michael Collins: The Man Who Made Ireland**. It is a balanced study. He described Collins as the founder of modern guerrilla warfare. Third is Peter Hart, an historian. He published his **Mick: The Real Michael Collins** in 2005. He concluded that, while Collins lacked the moral stature of a Nelson Mandela, he was the most successful politician in modern Irish history and his achievements continue to have a positive effect on the life of the Irish nation. Next is James Mackey who identifies himself as a Scotsman and Presbyterian, in 1996 authored **Michael Collins: A Life**. He concluded Collins was arguably one of the great figures of the twentieth century. His book is noteworthy for including conversations between and among major characters for which there is no evidentiary foundation beyond the fact that they were consistent with the course of events. Finally, there is Margaret Forester, a historian who published **Michael Collins, The Lost Leader** in 1971, revised in 1989. This seems to be the most thorough of the biographies.

⁴ Forester, Margery, *Michael Collins: The Lost leader*, Dublin, Gill Books, 1971, revised 1989, pp. 4-5. Mackay, James, *Michael Collins: A Life*, Edinburgh, Mainstream Publishing, 1996, pp. 18-19. Hart, Peter, *Mick: The Real Michael Collins*, New York, 2005, Penguin Books, pp. 3-4. Coogan, Tim Pat, *Michael Collins: The Man Who Made Ireland*, New York, Palgrave, 1990.

⁵ Forester, p. 3.

⁶ Hart, pp. 14-15.

⁷ Hart, p. 13.

⁸ Mackay, pp. 21-22.

⁹ Mackay, p. 25. Forester, p.14.

¹⁰ The Post Office in Ireland and Britain was where most people's government activity took place.

¹¹ Hart, p. 14. Forester, p. 17.

¹² This included study of the Irish language, but he also read English and American literature including writings of Charles Dickens, Walter Scott, H. G. Wells and Walt Whitman. This was done under Hannie's encouraging eye. Forester, p. 19

¹³ Forester, p. 19.

¹⁴ Mackay, pp. 25-26.

¹⁵ Hart, pp. 61-62.

¹⁶ Hart, pp. 62-63.

¹⁷ Hart, p. 76.

¹⁸ Hart, p. 76.

¹⁹ Mackay, p. 31.

²⁰ Hart, p. 40. Coogan, pp. 15-17.

²¹ Hart, p. 48.

²² Coogan, pp. 15-16.

²³ He entered evening classes at King's College in London. This was done to prepare for additional civil service examinations. This was his only effort at formal higher education.

²⁴ Hittle, J. B. E. *Michael Collins and the Anglo-Irish War*, Dulles, Virginia, Potomac Books, 2011, p. 52.

²⁵ Over the years there have been different organizations described as the IRA. As the Anglo-Irish War later developed, the name IRA was used by many to describe various Irish forces who fought the British in Ireland.

²⁶ Forester, p. 27

²⁷ Hart, p. 53-54. Coogan, pp. 23-24.

²⁸ Forester, p. 27.

²⁹ Forester, 27.

³⁰ Forester, p. 28. Coogan, p. 29. By 1921 the Volunteers identified themselves as the IRA. Hart, p. 193.

³¹ Forester, p. 28. Coogan, p. 29.

³² Curran, Joseph, *The Birth of the Irish Free State*, The University of Alabama Press, 1980, pp. 7-8.

³³ By the end of the war 49,000 of the Irish who had volunteered for service in the British Army had fallen in battle. Forester, p. 89.

³⁴ Curran, pp. 18-19.

³⁵ Hart, p. 78.

³⁶ Years later, when he managed funds raised to support Ireland's revolt against Britain, he used Guaranty as a financial institution to handle many of those funds. He remembered Guaranty's parting payment.

³⁷ Coogan, p. 31.

³⁸ Collins once wrote: "The trade I know best is the financial trade." Coogan, p. 17.

³⁹ Coogan, pp. 32-33.

⁴⁰ These forces were thereafter known as the Irish Republican Army (IRA). Forester, p.42.

⁴¹ 1,600 people in all took part in the Dublin insurrection on the rebel side. Curran, p. 11.

⁴² More Irish civilians were killed or wounded during Easter week than the combined military casualties. Two hundred fifty-six civilians were killed; two thousand were wounded. Only sixty-two rebels had been killed during the fighting.

⁴³ Collins subsequently concluded the "rising was bungled terribly, costing many a good life. It seemed at first to be well-organized, but afterwards became subjected to panic decisions and a great lack of very essential organization and co-operation." Coogan, pp. 53-54. He took those conclusions to heart when he subsequently became active in later uprising action.

⁴⁴ Townshend, Charles, *Easter 1916, The Irish Rebellion*, Chicago, Ivan R. Dee, 2005, pp. 279-285.

⁴⁵ Coogan, p. 45. The history of warfare in much of the twentieth century has shown that imprisonment of rebels leaves a government with the power to come to a sounder conclusion of rebellion activity by dealing years later with those same people. Consider, for example, the treatment of the British government in India with imprisonment of Gandhi and Nehru. Or even South Africa's imprisonment of Nelson Mandela.

⁴⁶ W.B. Yeats, the first Irishman to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, contributed to how the uprising was to be remembered. He authored the poem "Easter 1916" which concluded with these words:

And what if excess of love
Bewildered them till they died?
I write it out in a verse –
MacDonagh and MacBride
And Connolly and Pearse
Now and in time to be,
Wherever green is worn,
Are changed, changed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.

⁴⁷ He had been given the rank of staff-captain in the rebel forces. The British ripped off that insignia mark from his uniform after the surrender. Forester, p. 46.

⁴⁸ He also played a leading part in the IRB reorganization being done among the prisoners. O'Connor, p.36.

⁴⁹ Some in this group began to describe him scornfully as thinking he was a big fellow. The nickname stuck. Henceforth he was known as the Big Fellow, a term considered with awe and affection. O'Connor, p. 37.

⁵⁰ O'Connor, Frank, *The Big Fellow: Michael Collins & The Irish Revolution*, Cork, Mercier Press, 1937, pp. 35-37. Hart, pp. 108-109.

⁵¹ Collins was only arrested and imprisoned one more time by the British. That was in April 1918. His offense was making speeches. He was released on bail and was never imprisoned again. Forester, pp. 87-88.

⁵² Coogan, p. 57. Mackay, p. 74.

⁵³ He and some colleagues found relief in drinking on Christmas Day. After all, he had been imprisoned for more than half a year. At the end of that day, "he was lifted on to a sidecar and, drunk as a lord, [was] bundled by his friends into the Cork train." Coogan, p. 57.

⁵⁴ Forester, p. 62.

⁵⁵ Forester, pp. 67-69. Hart, pp. 112-116.

⁵⁶ Hart, p. 122.

⁵⁷ Coogan, pp. 63-65. Forester, pp. 69-70.

⁵⁸ Forester, p. 69.

⁵⁹ Forester, p. 70.

⁶⁰ Collins's work at National Aid ended in 1918 once the released prisoners had been absorbed into community life. Forester, p. 86.

⁶¹ There was also the Irish Party. It was a political organization which had little direct impact on independence-directed events during these years. Its members had been elected to Parliament from Ireland. They did not exercise any real power there and soon faded away. Hart, p. 53-54.

⁶² Forester, p. 73.

⁶³ Coogan, p. 65.

⁶⁴ De Valera was a battalion commander during the Dublin uprising and managed his duties there with distinction. His courage in battle was never in dispute. He was a college graduate, a teacher at a college in Ireland and a married man with children. In time his family grew to seven children.

⁶⁵ Fanning, Ronan, *Eamon de Valera: A Will To Power*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2016, pp. 59-60.

⁶⁶ What made these alliances so fluid was that some of them included members of more than one organization with different ends in mind. They were also competing for finances and the attention of potential fighters. On many occasions, as the years continued, those who sought and carried out violent remedies prevailed. That was at least until the peace treaty negotiations started in late 1921. This profile is not exclusive to those with Gaelic backgrounds. It may in fact be the rule in most rebellions.

⁶⁷ Coogan, p. 72.

⁶⁸ Among Collins's faults was a tendency to bait people. He turned out to be a unifying force only when he was in control. Coogan, pp. 70 and 72.

⁶⁹ By 1918 de Valera was recognized by many as "the foremost moderate in the revolution and was a popular hero with enormous influence on the course of events." Hittle, p.70. While he acknowledged the importance of armed force to the Irish revolutionary tradition, de Valera had learned during the Easter week of 1916 "the folly of trying to defeat the British Army in a stand-up battle." Hittle, p. 51.

⁷⁰ Forester, pp. 78-82. Hittle, pp. 63-64.

⁷¹ Forester, p. 82.

⁷² Coogan, pp. 78-81.

⁷³ Coogan, pp. 75-79.

⁷⁴ Of special note is the fact that one of the detectives arranged to smuggle Collins into Detective Headquarters where he spent the night going through G Division records. Collins had the entire modus operandi of the RIC's intelligence system laid out before him. "He saw both what he was up against and how to combat the enemy, the first Irish revolutionary to do so." Coogan, p. 107.

⁷⁵ Hittle, pp. 228-229.

⁷⁶ Hittle, p. 226. Hittle's text is a careful study of what Collins did and avoided doing in achieving the intelligence activity successes he did. The book's theme is that Collins outperformed the British intelligence services in the years leading to and including military action before and during the Anglo-Irish War. Collins advanced revolutionary strategy to a new level.

⁷⁷ Dwyer, T. R. Ryle, *Big Fellow, Long Fellow, A Joint Biography of Collins and de Valera*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1998, p. 79

⁷⁸ Mackay, p. 118.

⁷⁹ Forester, pp. 110-115.

⁸⁰ Mackay, p. 117.

⁸¹ Dublin Castle was the seat of British power in Ireland.

⁸² Townshend, *The Republic*, pp. 7-8.

⁸³ Rank and file in the RIC were largely Catholic. The highest positions in the RIC were held by Protestants. Curran, p. 24.

⁸⁴ Curran, pp. 24-25.

⁸⁵ Forester, p.84.

⁸⁶ Forester, p. 133.

⁸⁷ One of the Sinn Fein the party leaders commented that, having prevailed at the polls, the party then had to explain what Sinn Fein was. An historian has written that the Irish voters had endorsed the demand for national self-determination, they had not made a demand for armed conflict with Britain. Curran, p. 21.

⁸⁸ Curran, p. 21. Coogan, p. 92.

⁸⁹ Townshend, *The Republic*, p. pp. 64-65.

⁹⁰ Collins's reason was that too many of the Sinn Fein candidates who had been elected to Westminster in December were in British prisons. Forester, p. 101.

⁹¹ Forester, p. 101.

⁹² Fanning, p. 89.

⁹³ See, e.g., Collins, p. 43. Pakenham, p. 33 and p. 47.

⁹⁴ O'Connor, p. 74.

⁹⁵ Collins, p. 43.

⁹⁶ Costigan, Giovanni, *The Anglo-Irish Conflict, 1919-1922, A War of Independence or Systematized Murder*, University Review, Edinburgh University Press, p. 77.

⁹⁷ Compare the numbers of those killings, for example, to the millions murdered in the Russian civil war starting in 1917. Or the many thousands murdered during the Japanese conquest of much of China starting in the 1930s or the wars in Vietnam starting after the end of World War II. At least the Anglo-Irish War in its most vigorous times was a short one.

⁹⁸ Pakenham, Frank, *Peace by Ordeal: An Account from first-hand sources of the of the negotiations and signatures of the Anglo-Irish Treaty 1921*, Cork, Mercier Press, 1951, p. 46.

⁹⁹ Pakenham, p. 46.

¹⁰⁰ Forester, p. 142.

¹⁰¹ This name reflected to color of the uniforms the Black and Tan wore.

¹⁰² Forester, p.140.

¹⁰³ Winston Churchill is credited with thinking up this second force. Coogan, p. 127.

¹⁰⁴ Coogan, p. 140.

¹⁰⁵ O'Connor, pp. 104-105.

¹⁰⁶ The remaining forces of the RIC had largely been driven out of their barracks except for the most strongly fortified ones in the larger towns. Coogan, p. 140.

¹⁰⁷ The strength of their armaments varied as they captured British weapons in RIC barracks.

¹⁰⁸ Coogan, pp. 158-159.

¹⁰⁹ Hart, p. 242.

¹¹⁰ Mackay, p. 180.

¹¹¹ Fanning, pp. 80-89.

¹¹² De Valera was imprisoned by the British in 1918 as part of a group of 73 Sinn Fein leaders. Collins went to the prison in July 1918 and personally arranged de Valera's escape. De Valera then went to the United States and remained there until December 1920. Fanning, pp. 66-70.

¹¹³ Curran, p. 61.

¹¹⁴ Hart, p. 274.

¹¹⁵ The Dail had unanimously decided that those who would be appointed plenipotentiaries would be given a free hand. De Valera made clear he fully supported that position and that the plenipotentiaries should go to the conference without their hands tied in any way. Coogan, pp. 229-230.

¹¹⁶ One of Collins's biographers described de Valera's conduct as "the worst single decision of de Valera's life." Coogan, p. 228.

¹¹⁷ Hart, p. 279. Coogan, pp. 221-222.

¹¹⁸ Any agreement identified in the Treaty would have to be approved both by the British Parliament and the Irish Dail. While approval was not certain, it was reasonable to conclude it would be forthcoming from the British Parliament. The British were prepared to take their chances with the Dail. In fact, the legislatures of both countries approved the Treaty when it was presented to them.

¹¹⁹ De Valera to Lloyd George. Documents on Irish Foreign Policy. Delivered to 10 Downing Street on August 11, 1921.

¹²⁰ De Valera to Lloyd George. Documents on Irish Foreign Policy. Delivered to 10 Downing Street on August 25, 1921.

¹²¹ September 29, 1921. Lloyd George to de Valera. Documents on Irish Foreign Policy.

¹²² September 30, 1921. De Valera to Lloyd George. Documents on Irish Foreign Policy.

¹²³ The written Instructions the Irish Cabinet gave to the plenipotentiaries were: "The plenipotentiaries were vested with such powers from Dail Eireann "to negotiate and conclude on behalf of Ireland with the

representatives of his Britannic Majesty, George V, a Treaty or Treaties of settlement, and association and accommodation between Ireland and the community of nations known as the British Commonwealth.” Instructions to plenipotentiaries from the Cabinet. Documents on Irish Foreign Policy. October 7, 1921.

¹²⁴ Report from Harry Boland and Joseph McGrath to Eamon de Valera. September 14, 1921. Documents on Irish Foreign Policy.

¹²⁵ Pakenham, p. 124.

¹²⁶ Bromage, Mary, *Churchill and Ireland*, Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 1964, p. 66.

¹²⁷ Curran, p. 82.

¹²⁸ Pakenham, p. 297.

¹²⁹ Coogan, p. 227.

¹³⁰ Coogan, pp. 228-233.

¹³¹ Coogan, p. 229.

¹³² Coogan, p. 233.

¹³³ Hart, p. 408.

¹³⁴ O'Connor. P.295.

¹³⁵ O'Connor, p. 290.

¹³⁶ This hotel at which Collins often stayed was not one with today's modern conveniences. Water was carried to the rooms and the chamber pots were emptied by hand. Collins and Kiernan, p. 11. This was the way his boyhood home in County Cork was maintained.

¹³⁷ Collins and Kiernan. p.

¹³⁸ Forester, p.214.

¹³⁹ Collins and Kiernan, p. 232.

¹⁴⁰ Americans have the experience of the Vietnam War negotiations which took more than five years to conclude.

¹⁴¹ Churchill described the tone of these initial meetings: “We found ourselves confronted in the early days not only with the impractical and visionary fanaticism and romanticism of the extreme Irish secret societies, but also with those tides of distrust and hatred which had flowed between the two countries for so many centuries.... And here in Ireland were hatreds which in Mr. Kipling's phrase would eat the live steel from a rifle butt.” Churchill, p. 166.

¹⁴² Coogan, p. 244.

¹⁴³ The parties were able to reach agreement on several issues of lesser importance.

¹⁴⁴ Townshend, p. 171.

¹⁴⁵ Churchill summarized his perceptions about the two negotiators for Ireland in this manner. He described Griffith as an “unusual figure – a silent Irishman ... and that no word that ever issued from his lips in my presence did he ever unsay” Churchill, *Thoughts and Adventures*, p.167-168. As to Collins, he noted he did not enjoy the same education advantages as did Griffith, but he had elemental qualities and mother-wit which were in many ways remarkable. He stood far nearer to the terrible incidents of the conflict” than did Griffith. Churchill, p. 168.

¹⁴⁶ Churchill believed the commercial reasons should have resolved the issue. He addressed the House of Commons on December 15, 1921, and said he was convinced “that some day ... Ulster will join herself with Southern Ireland and ... the national unity of Ireland within the British Empire will be attained.” Bromage, p. 68 and p. 197. Others in the British group of negotiators held similar views. At the end of the day, these views did not matter. The British coalition government was confronted with a general election in October 1922. The coalition cabinet had staked its political tenure on the Treaty. The government fell from office in the election. Bromage, p. 95. The Irish issues now fell to the successors of Lloyd George's cabinet and those in Ireland who replaced Collins in leadership.

¹⁴⁷ Much has been written whether Lloyd George outmaneuvered the Irish delegates on this issue during negotiations. He had the Irish suggest what amounted to a Boundary Commission. See, e.g., Heintz, Matthew, *The Freedom to Achieve Freedom: Negotiating the Anglo-Irish Treaty*, University of Washington, Winter, 2009, Intersections online, pp. 431-451. The argument is unpersuasive. Griffith and Collins went to London to negotiate the best possible agreement. That is what they achieved, Most of the people of primarily Protestant Northern Island did not want to be part of the Catholic South. Nor did Britain or the South have sufficient power to force Ulster to accept one government for the entire island. Other than walking away entirely from negotiations – which neither Griffith nor Collins intended to do – they remained and reached agreement. That the Boundary Commission later elected not to change the boundary is of interest but nothing more. The Treaty compelled no

such obligation. De Valera and others who subsequently criticized the Irish plenipotentiary delegates for signing a Treaty the critics did not like are simply second-guessers.

¹⁴⁸ Collins made substantial efforts after the Treaty was signed to advance his nation's interest in actions in Northern Ireland. Some of those efforts were inconsistent with the Irish Free State's obligations under the Treaty.

¹⁴⁹ The long-held hostility of many Irish to Britain for its tragic mishandling of the nineteenth century famine was always there. This hostility could not be reconciled with what the London delegation was achieving, i.e., the departure of Britain from any control over the twenty-six counties. Many of them had remained silent and lived a quiet existence while their countrymen, small in number, both dead and alive, had brought the British to the bargaining table by waging the Anglo-Irish War.

¹⁵⁰ See Royal Irish Academy, National Archives, Documents On Irish Foreign Policy. This document contains numerous written reports from Griffith to de Valera and other memoranda reporting on the status of negotiations.

¹⁵¹ One point which de Valera had advanced himself was called "External Association." It would require Britain to accept his idea about the future relationship between the two countries. In effect he was telling Britain to modify its foreign policy to satisfy his needs. The British delegates rejected it promptly.

¹⁵² One aspect of the negotiations is worth noting. Churchill invited Collins to his home one night to continue negotiations. During that discussion Collins is said to have commented on the fact that Britain had a ten-thousand-pound reward on his head. (That was not so.) Churchill then discussed the fact that the Boers had a twenty-five-pound reward on his capture during the Boer War when he had escaped from their captivity. He showed the Boer War notice of the same to Collins. Churchill, p. 170. The two men then bonded in some fashion. It is likely something like this episode did occur, but it was best captured in *Allegiance*, a play written in 2012 by Mary Kenny, a distinguished Irish journalist. She captures what happened that evening, as well as Collins, as an individual and his long-term beliefs. In reflecting on the Treaty agreement soon to be reached she has Collins say these words about his own life: "And when all this is over - when we have the governance of Ireland, as is our right, Winston: as is our democratic right - I'll get married to Kitty ..." *Allegiance*, pp. 58-59.

¹⁵³ The Treaty formally identified the forces Griffin and Collins represented in the negotiations as the Irish Free State. Britain was no longer to identify it as a murder gang which had long been Britain's common identification.

¹⁵⁴ Hart, p. 324.

¹⁵⁵ Forester, p. 271.

¹⁵⁶ Mackay, pp. 230-234. O'Connor, pp. 255-259. Hart, p. 338 and pp. 341-342.

¹⁵⁷ Collins, Michael, *A Path To Freedom*, Greenbrook Publications, notes written August 1922, p. 23.

¹⁵⁸ During the Christmas recess Collins benefitted from the fact that 369 elected and other bodies had endorsed the Treaty while only fourteen declared opposition. Curran, p. 150. The voice of the people on the treaty was being heard.

¹⁵⁹ Hart, p. 393.

¹⁶⁰ The primary subjects are the advance of Irish liberties, the defects in the proposals advanced by the anti-Treaty groups, success in how the Irish people handled the Anglo-Irish War, why Britain sought peace with the Irish, Ireland's distinctive culture and how Ireland can and should be building up its life as a separate nation.

¹⁶¹ Collins, p. 10.

¹⁶² Collins, p. 12.

¹⁶³ Among the most dramatic of these events was the British physical surrender of Dublin Castle. Uniformed soldiers of the Army of the Irish Free State entered the premises of Dublin Castle. British soldiers who had long commanded that place, took down the British flag and departed, never to return. The flag of Ireland was raised. The central location of British power in Ireland was now in the hands of the Irish people. There can be no doubt Ireland had prevailed in the Anglo-Irish War.

¹⁶⁴ It was to be a Provisional Government. The final form of government of the South would be established later in 1922 once a Constitution had been created.

¹⁶⁵ Forester, p. 306.

¹⁶⁶ Curran, p. 181.

¹⁶⁷ Curran, p. 181.

¹⁶⁸ One aspect of the attack on the Four Quarters had to have been its enormous effect on Collins. Artillery was needed for the Provisional Government to succeed in this battle. The Irish had none, so they had to borrow cannons and ammunition from the British. It was used to profound effect during the crushing of seizure of the Four Quarters and killed Republicans who had seized that place. For all anyone knew these were the same cannons the

British had used against Collins and those who defended the GPO in the Dublin uprising. Townshend, Charles, *Easter 1916: The Irish Rebellion*, Chicago, Ivan R. Dee, 2005, p. 191. Difficult though this decision was to use this artillery, he made it because that is what strong leaders do.

¹⁶⁹ Bew, Paul, *Ireland: The Politics of Enmity 1789-2006*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007, p.443. There does not appear to be any reliable published study summarizing the total deaths of Irish and British, military and civilian, starting with the 1916 Dublin uprising. Figures which are available cover individual raids, ambushes, executions, pitched battles and other forms of death. A reasonable estimate of the total of the same would be numbered in the low thousands.

¹⁷⁰ Forester, p 356.

¹⁷¹ Forester, p. 355. Mackay, p. 295.

¹⁷² Praises for Collins poured in from all quarters. To pick just one, Lloyd George wrote: "His engaging personality won friendships even amongst those who first met him as foes, and to all who met him the news of his death comes as a personal sorrow." Mackay, p. 296.

¹⁷³ Kissinger, Henry, *Leadership: Six Studies in World Strategy*, New York, Penguin Press, 2022.

¹⁷⁴ Kissinger, p. xxiii.

¹⁷⁵ Kissinger, pp. xxiv-xxv.

¹⁷⁶ A fair question to ask at this point is what exactly de Valera did for Ireland by leading it into a civil war. The answer is he did it a great disservice. The civil war also temporarily ended de Valera's public service. He did not gain any position in the government of the Irish Free State until 1932 when the people chose him to become Prime Minister (Taoiseach). He served in that position for many years. He carried out the action Collins had predicted Ireland would soon take: eliminate Ireland's status as a Dominion; declare it to be a Republic; and to render moot the oath to the King members of the Dail were to give. Britain did not resist these actions. Fanning, pp.161-181. He subsequently served as the nation's President. He retired in 1973 and died two years later aged ninety-two. Collins had died at the age of thirty-one.

APPENDIX

Treaty between Great Britain & Ireland

Signed 6th December 1921 at London

2012/5/1

TREATY.

between

GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND.

signed

6th December, 1921.

at LONDON.

SECRET.

~~PROPOSED~~ ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT.

1. Ireland shall have the same constitutional status in the Community of Nations known as the British Empire as the Dominion of Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia, the Dominion of New Zealand, and the Union of South Africa, with a Parliament having powers to make laws for the peace order and good government of Ireland and an Executive responsible to that Parliament, and shall be styled and known as the Irish Free State.
2. Subject to the provisions hereinafter set out the position of the Irish Free State in relation to the Imperial Parliament and Government and otherwise shall be that of the Dominion of Canada, and the law, practice and constitutional usage governing the relationship of the Crown or the Representative of the Crown and of the Imperial Parliament to the Dominion of Canada shall govern their relationship to the Irish Free State.
3. The Representative of the Crown in Ireland shall be appointed in like manner as the Governor-General of Canada and in accordance with the practice observed in the making of such appointments.
4. The oath to be taken by Members of the Parliament of the Irish Free State shall be in the following form:-

I.....do solemnly swear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of the Irish Free State as by law established and that I will be faithful to H.M. King George V., his heirs and successors by law, in virtue of the common citizenship of Ireland with Great Britain and her adherence to and membership of the group of nations forming the British Commonwealth of Nations.

5. The Irish Free State shall assume liability for the service of the Public Debt of the United Kingdom as existing at the date hereof and towards the payment of war pensions as existing at that date in such proportion as may be fair and equitable, having regard to any just claims on the part of Ireland by way of set off or counter-claim, the amount of such sums being determined in default of agreement by the arbitration of one or more independent persons being citizens of the British Empire.

6. Until an arrangement has been made between the British and Irish Governments whereby the Irish Free State undertakes her own coastal defence, the defence by sea of Great Britain and Ireland shall be undertaken by His Majesty's Imperial Forces. But this shall not prevent the construction or maintenance by the Government of the Irish Free State of such vessels as are necessary for the protection of the Revenue or the Fisheries.

The foregoing provisions of this Article shall be reviewed at a Conference of Representatives of the British and Irish Governments to be held at the expiration of five years from the date hereof with a view to the undertaking by Ireland of a share in her own coastal defence.

7. The Government of the Irish Free State shall afford to His Majesty's Imperial Forces:-

- (a) In time of peace such harbour and other facilities as are indicated in the Annex hereto, or such other facilities as may from time to time be agreed between the British Government and the Government of the Irish Free State; and

(b) In time of war or of strained relations with a Foreign Power such harbour and other facilities as the British Government may require for the purposes of such defence as aforesaid.

8. With a view to securing the observance of the principle of international limitation of armaments, if the Government of the Irish Free State establishes and maintains a military defence force, the establishments thereof shall not exceed in size such proportion of the military establishments maintained in Great Britain as that which the population of Ireland bears to the population of Great Britain.

9. The ports of Great Britain and the Irish Free State shall be freely open to the ships of the other country on payment of the customary port and other dues.

10. The Government of the Irish Free State agrees to pay fair compensation on terms not less favourable than those accorded by the Act of 1920 to judges, officials, members of Police Forces and other Public Servants who are discharged by it or who retire in consequence of the change of government effected in pursuance hereof.

Provided that this agreement shall not apply to members of the Auxiliary Police Force or to persons recruited in Great Britain for the Royal Irish Constabulary during the two years next preceding the date hereof. The British Government will assume responsibility for such compensation or pensions as may be payable to any of these excepted persons.

11. Until the expiration of one month from the passing of the Act of Parliament for the ratification of this instrument, the powers of the Parliament and the government of the Irish Free State shall not be exercisable as respects Northern Ireland and the provisions of the Government of Ireland Act, 1920, shall, so far as they relate to Northern Ireland remain of full force and effect, and no election shall be held for the return of members to serve in the Parliament of the Irish Free State for constituencies in Northern Ireland, unless a resolution is passed by both Houses of the Parliament of Northern Ireland in favour of the holding of such election before the end of the said month.

12. If before the expiration of the said month, an address is presented to His Majesty by both Houses of the Parliament of Northern Ireland to that effect, the powers of the Parliament and Government of the Irish Free State shall no longer extend to Northern Ireland, and the provisions of the Government of Ireland Act, 1920, (including those relating to the Council of Ireland) shall so far as they relate to Northern Ireland, continue to be of full force and effect, and this instrument shall have effect subject to the necessary modifications.

Provided that if such an address is so presented a Commission consisting of three persons, one to be appointed by the Government of the Irish Free State, one to be appointed by the Government of Northern Ireland and one who shall be Chairman to be appointed by the British Government shall determine in accordance with the wishes of the inhabitants, so far as may be compatible with economic and geographic conditions, the boundaries between Northern Ireland and the rest of Ireland, and for the purpose of the Government of Ireland Act, 1920, and of this instrument, the boundary of Northern Ireland shall be such as may be determined by such Commission.

13. For the purpose of the last foregoing article, the powers of the Parliament of Southern Ireland under the Government of Ireland Act, 1920, to elect members of the Council of Ireland shall after the Parliament of the Irish Free State is constituted be exercised by that Parliament.

14. After the expiration of the said month, if no such address as is mentioned in Article 12 hereof is presented, the Parliament and Government of Northern Ireland shall continue to exercise as respects Northern Ireland the powers conferred on them by the Government of Ireland Act, 1920, but the Parliament and Government of the Irish Free State shall in Northern Ireland have in relation to matters in respect of which the Parliament of Northern Ireland has not power to make laws under that Act (including matters which under the said Act are within the jurisdiction of the Council of Ireland) the same powers as in the rest of Ireland, subject to such other provisions as may be agreed in manner hereinafter appearing.

15. At any time after the date hereof the Government of Northern Ireland and the provisional Government of Southern Ireland hereinafter constituted may meet for the purpose of discussing the provisions subject to which the last foregoing article is to operate in the event of no such address as is therein mentioned being presented and those provisions may include:

- (a) Safeguards with regard to patronage in Northern Ireland;
- (b) Safeguards with regard to the collection of revenue in Northern Ireland;
- (c) Safeguards with regard to import and export duties affecting the trade or industry of Northern Ireland;
- (d) Safeguards for minorities in Northern Ireland;

- (e) The settlement of the financial relations between Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State.
- (f) The establishment and powers of a local militia in Northern Ireland and the relation of the Defense Forces of the Irish Free State and of Northern Ireland respectively;

and if at any such meeting provisions are agreed to, the same shall have effect as if they were included amongst the provisions subject to which the powers of the Parliament and Government of the Irish Free State are to be exercisable in Northern Ireland under Article 14 hereof.

16. Neither the Parliament of the Irish Free State nor the Parliament of Northern Ireland shall make any law so as either directly or indirectly to endow any religion or prohibit or restrict the free exercise thereof or give any preference or impose any disability on account of religious belief or religious status or affect prejudicially the right of any child to attend a school receiving public money without attending the religious instruction at the school or make any discrimination as respects state aid between schools under the management of different religious denominations or divert from any religious denomination or any educational institution any of its property except for public utility purposes and on payment of compensation.

17. By way of provisional arrangement for the administration of Southern Ireland during the interval which must elapse between the date hereof and the constitution of a Parliament and Government of the Irish Free State in accordance therewith, steps shall be taken forthwith for summoning a meeting of members of Parliament elected for constituencies

in Southern Ireland since the passing of the Government of Ireland Act, 1920, and for constituting a provisional Government, and the British Government shall take the steps necessary to transfer to such provisional Government the powers and machinery requisite for the discharge of its duties, provided that every member of such provisional Government shall have signified in writing his or her acceptance of this instrument. But this arrangement shall not continue in force beyond the expiration of twelve months from the date hereof.

10. This instrument shall be submitted forthwith by His Majesty's Government for the approval of Parliament and by the Irish signatories to a meeting summoned for the purpose of the members elected to sit in the House of Commons of Southern Ireland, and if approved shall be ratified by the necessary legislation.

*On behalf of the Irish
Delegation*

*at the request of the British
Delegation*

Michael O'Connell

Robert O'Connell

Edmund O'Connell

James O'Connell

*On behalf of the British
Delegation*

A. Lloyd George

Arthur Chamberlain

Birkenhead

December 6, 1921.

Herbert Asquith

ANNEX

1. The following are the specific facilities required.

Dockyard port at Berehaven.

- (a) Admiralty property and rights to be retained as at the date hereof. Harbour defences to remain in charge of British care and maintenance parties.

Queenstown.

- (b) Harbour defences to remain in charge of British care and maintenance parties. Certain mooring buoys to be retained for use of His Majesty's ships.

Belfast Lough.

- (c) Harbour defences to remain in charge of British care and maintenance parties.

Lough Swilly.

- (d) Harbour defences to remain in charge of British care and maintenance parties.

Aviation.

- (e) Facilities in the neighbourhood of the above Ports for coastal defence by air.

Oil Fuel Storage.

- (f) Raulbowline } To be offered for sale to commercial companies
Rathmullen } under guarantee that purchasers shall maintain
a certain minimum stock for Admiralty purposes.

2. A Convention shall be made between the British Government and the Government of the Irish Free State to give effect to the following conditions:-

- (a) That submarine cables shall not be landed or wireless stations for communication with places outside Ireland be established except by agreement with the British Government; that the existing cable landing rights and wireless concessions shall not be withdrawn except by agreement with the British Government; and that the British Government shall be entitled to land additional submarine cables or establish additional wireless stations for communication with places outside Ireland
- (b) That lighthouses, buoys, beacons, and any navigational marks or navigational aids shall be maintained by the Government of the Irish Free State as at the date hereof and shall not be removed or added to except by agreement with the British Government.
- (c) That war signal stations shall be closed down and left in charge of care and maintenance parties, the Government of the Irish Free State being offered the option of taking them over and working them for commercial purposes subject to Admiralty inspection, and guaranteeing the upkeep of existing telegraphic communication therewith.

3. A Convention shall be made between the same Governments for the regulation of Civil Communication by Air.

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***Final text of the Articles of Agreement for a Treaty between Great Britain
and Ireland as signed.***

London, 6 December 1921

1. Ireland shall have the same constitutional status in the Community of Nations known as the British Empire as the Dominion of Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia, the Dominion of New Zealand, and the Union of South Africa with a Parliament having powers to make laws for the peace, order and good government of Ireland and an Executive responsible to that Parliament, and shall be styled and known as the Irish Free State.
2. Subject to the provisions hereinafter set out the position of the Irish Free State in relation to the Imperial Parliament and Government and otherwise shall be that of the Dominion of Canada, and the law, practice and constitutional usage governing the relationship of the Crown or the representative of the Crown and of the Imperial Parliament to the Dominion of Canada shall govern their relationship to the Irish Free State.
3. The representative of the Crown in Ireland shall be appointed in like manner as the Governor-General of Canada and in accordance with the practice observed in the making of such appointments.
4. The oath to be taken by Members of the Parliament of the Irish Free State shall be in the following form:- I do solemnly swear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of the Irish Free State as by law established and that I will be faithful to H.M. King George V., his heirs and successors by law, in virtue of the common citizenship of Ireland with Great Britain and her adherence to and membership of the group of nations forming the British Commonwealth of Nations.
5. The Irish Free State shall assume liability for the service of the Public Debt of the United Kingdom as existing at the date hereof and towards the payment of War Pensions as existing at that date in such proportion as may be fair and equitable, having regard to any just claim on the part of Ireland by way of set-off or counter-claim, the amount of such sums being determined in default of agreement by the arbitration of one or more independent persons being citizens of the British Empire
6. Until an arrangement has been made between the British and Irish Governments whereby the Irish Free State undertakes her own coastal defence, the defence by sea of Great Britain and Ireland shall be undertaken by His Majesty's Imperial Forces, but this shall not prevent the construction or maintenance by the Government of the Irish Free State of such vessels as are necessary for the protection of the Revenue or the Fisheries. The foregoing provisions of this article shall be reviewed at a conference of Representatives of the British and Irish governments, to be held at the expiration of five years from the date hereof with a view to the undertaking by Ireland of a share in her own coastal defence.
7. The Government of the Irish Free State shall afford to His Majesty's Imperial Forces
 - (a) In time of peace such harbour and other facilities as are indicated in the Annex hereto, or such other facilities as may from time to time be agreed between the British Government and the Government of the Irish Free State; and
 - (b) In time of war or of strained relations with a Foreign Power such harbour and other facilities as the British Government may require for the purposes of such defence as aforesaid.
8. With a view to securing the observance of the principle of international limitation of armaments, if the Government of the Irish Free State establishes and maintains a military defence force, the establishments thereof shall not exceed in size such proportion of the military establishments maintained in Great Britain as that which the population of Ireland bears to the population of Great Britain.
9. The ports of Great Britain and the Irish Free State shall be freely open to the ships of the other country on payment of the customary port and other dues.
10. The Government of the Irish Free State agrees to pay fair compensation on terms not less favourable than those accorded by the Act of 1920 to judges, officials, members of Police Forces and other Public Servants who are discharged by it or who retire in consequence of the change of government effected in pursuance hereof. Provided that this agreement shall not apply to members of the Auxiliary Police Force or to persons recruited in Great Britain for the Royal Irish Constabulary during the two years next preceding the date hereof. The British Government will assume responsibility for such compensation or pensions as may be payable to any of these excepted persons.
11. Until the expiration of one month from the passing of the Act of Parliament for the ratification of this instrument, the powers of the Parliament and the Government of the Irish Free State shall not be

exercisable as respects Northern Ireland, and the provisions of the Government of Ireland Act 1920, shall, so far as they relate to Northern Ireland, remain of full force and effect, and no election shall be held for the return of members to serve in the Parliament of the Irish Free State for constituencies in Northern Ireland, unless a resolution is passed by both Houses of the Parliament of Northern Ireland in favour of the holding of such elections before the end of the said month.

12. If before the expiration of the said month, an address is presented to His Majesty by both Houses of the Parliament of Northern Ireland to that effect, the powers of the Parliament and the Government of the Irish Free State shall no longer extend to Northern Ireland, and the provisions of the Government of Ireland Act, 1920, (including those relating to the Council of Ireland) shall so far as they relate to Northern Ireland, continue to be of full force and effect, and this instrument shall have effect subject to the necessary modifications. Provided that if such an address is so presented a Commission consisting of three persons, one to be appointed by the Government of the Irish Free State, one to be appointed by the Government of Northern Ireland, and one who shall be Chairman to be appointed by the British Government shall determine in accordance with the wishes of the inhabitants, so far as may be compatible with economic and geographic conditions, the boundaries between Northern Ireland and the rest of Ireland, and for the purposes of the Government of Ireland Act, 1920, and of this instrument, the boundary of Northern Ireland shall be such as may be determined by such Commission.

13. For the purpose of the last foregoing article, the powers of the Parliament of Southern Ireland under the Government of Ireland Act, 1920, to elect members of the Council of Ireland shall after the Parliament of the Irish Free State is constituted be exercised by that Parliament.

14. After the expiration of the said month, if no such address as is mentioned in Article 12 hereof is presented, the Parliament and Government of Northern Ireland shall continue to exercise as respects Northern Ireland the powers conferred on them by the Government of Ireland Act, 1920, but the Parliament and Government of the Irish Free State shall in Northern Ireland have in relation to matters in respect of which the Parliament of Northern Ireland has not power to make laws under the Act (including matters which under the said Act are within the jurisdiction of the Council of Ireland) the same powers as in the rest of Ireland, subject to such other provisions as may be agreed in manner hereinafter appearing.

15. At any time after the date hereof the Government of Northern Ireland and the provisional Government of Southern Ireland hereinafter constituted may meet for the purpose of discussing the provisions subject to which the last foregoing Article is to operate in the event of no such address as is therein mentioned being presented and those provisions may include:-

- (a) Safeguards with regard to patronage in Northern Ireland.
- (b) Safeguards with regard to the collection of revenue in Northern Ireland.
- (c) Safeguards with regard to import and export duties affecting the trade or industry of Northern Ireland.
- (d) Safeguards for minorities in Northern Ireland.
- (e) The settlement of the financial relations between Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State.
- (f) The establishment and powers of a local militia in Northern Ireland and the relation of the Defence Forces of the Irish Free State and of Northern Ireland respectively, and if at any such meeting provisions are agreed to, the same shall have effect as if they were included amongst the provisions subject to which the powers of the Parliament and the Government of the Irish Free State are to be exercisable in Northern Ireland under Article 14 hereof.

16. Neither the Parliament of the Irish Free State nor the Parliament of Northern Ireland shall make any law so as either directly or indirectly to endow any religion or prohibit or restrict the free exercise thereof or give any preference or impose any disability on account of religious belief or religious status or affect prejudicially the right of any child to attend a school receiving public money without attending the religious instruction at the school or make any discrimination as respects State aid between schools under the management of different religious denominations or divert from any religious denomination or any educational institution any of its property except for public utility purposes and on payment of compensation.

17. By way of provisional arrangement for the administration of Southern Ireland during the interval which must elapse between the date hereof and the constitution of a Parliament and Government of the Irish Free State in accordance therewith, steps shall be taken forthwith for summoning a meeting of members of Parliament elected for constituencies in Southern Ireland since the passing of the Government of Ireland Act, 1920, and for constituting a provisional Government, and the British Government shall take the steps necessary to transfer to such provisional Government the powers and machinery requisite for the discharge of its duties, provided that every member of such provisional

Government shall have signified in writing his or her acceptance of this instrument. But this arrangement shall not continue in force beyond the expiration of twelve months from the date hereof.
18. This instrument shall be submitted forthwith by His Majesty's Government for the approval of Parliament and by the Irish signatories to a meeting summoned for the purpose of the members elected to sit in the House of Commons of Southern Ireland and if approved shall be ratified by the necessary legislation.

(Signed)

On behalf of the Irish Delegation, On behalf of the British Delegation.

Art Ó Griobhtha.
Micheál Ó Coileain.
Riobárd Bartún
E. S. Ó Dugain.
Seórsa Ghabháin Uí Dhubhthaigh

D. Lloyd George.
Austen Chamberlain.
Birkenhead.
Winston S. Churchill.
L. Worthington-Evans.
Hamar Greenwood.
Gordon Hewart.

6th December, 1921.

ANNEX.

1. The following are the specific facilities required:-

Dockyard Port at Berehaven.

(a) Admiralty property and rights to be retained as at the date hereof. Harbour defences to remain in charge of British care and maintenance parties.

Queenstown.

(b) Harbour defences to remain in charge of British care and maintenance parties. Certain mooring buoys to be retained for use of His Majesty's ships.

Belfast Lough.

(c) Harbour defences to remain in charge of British care and maintenance parties.

Lough Swilly.

(d) Harbour defences to remain in charge of British care and maintenance parties.

AVIATION.

(e) Facilities in the neighbourhood of the above ports for coastal defence by air.

OIL FUEL STORAGE.

(f) Haulbowline [and] Rathmullen[:] To be offered for sale to commercial companies under guarantee that purchasers shall maintain a certain minimum stock for Admiralty purposes.

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