

**Defending Ireland from the Irish:
The Irish Executive's reaction to
Transatlantic Fenianism
1864-68**

A thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
2017

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Declaration

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Summary

This thesis examines the Irish Executive's reaction to the threat posed by transatlantic Fenianism from the closing phase of the US Civil War to the end of Fenian activity in the year following the Fenian Rising of February and March 1867. It argues that the Fenian conspiracy was the catalyst for a substantial development in the Executive's ability to assert its control throughout the country in the name of maintaining state security. Its central argument is that the government's adoption of a policy of deterrence, combined with the systematic reform of the composition and distribution of military and constabulary forces on the island, at first delayed and later helped to suppress the abortive rising that eventually emerged. Although the periodization is narrow, the four years in question set in motion a security policy that would influence the governance of Ireland throughout the remainder of the century. The Executive's response, however, was influenced not only by the suppression of the Young Ireland rising in 1848, but was also guided by a wide range of transnational influences. Central among these was the need to balance the needs of 'Home' and 'Imperial' Defence. What emerged was a practice that this thesis calls 'counterinsurgency off the shelf', where previous Irish plans and similar actions from the empire were adapted to the immediate circumstances.

The thesis draws on a broad range of primary sources, such as the archives of the Lord Lieutenant John Wodehouse and his successor Lord Abercorn. The Chief Secretary's Office Registered Papers at the National Archives of Ireland are supplemented by using the Mayo, Larcom and Kilmainham Papers in the National Library of Ireland. The extensive correspondence of the Commanding Generals in Ireland, Sir George Brown and Sir Hugh Rose, are augmented by consulting the papers of the Army's Commander-in-Chief, the Duke of Cambridge. Particular attention is paid to papers in The National Archives, Kew, including Home Office, War Office, Colonial Office, and Admiralty Papers. Extensive use is also made of online and hardcopy newspaper archives in the United State, Canada, the UK, and Ireland to assess the public reception of the steps taken by the Irish Executive. The transnational perspectives are bolstered by incorporating an analysis of reports

from US Consuls in Ireland, as well as British Consuls in the United States and contemporary Canadian officials.

Methodologically, the thesis examines these actions in the light of recent developments in counterinsurgency theory and practice, and by using Michael Mann's theory of the "Infrastructural Power of the State" as a tool to facilitate this analysis. Where possible, the thesis views these elements in a transnational context, particularly by considering the wide range of imperial experiences of senior administrators and military commanders and assessing how those experiences influenced Irish affairs. This framework adds to current knowledge by demonstrating the capacities and limitations of the mid-Victorian governance of Ireland. It does this by contrasting the stated policy goals of the Executive and assessing them against the actual actions on the ground.

The thesis is structured into three broad thematic sections. The first, the 'Civil Sphere' examines the use of coercive legislation and policing as tools of counterinsurgency. Chapter One focuses primarily on how the suspension of *Habeas Corpus* was used to influence the potential insurgents and imprison those who threatened state security. Chapter Two considers how the Irish Constabulary shifted from its usual civil duties to embrace more militarized functions at a time of crisis. Chapters Three and Four in the second section, the 'Military Sphere', examine the British Army and Irish Militia. The reform and redeployment of the army for political ends and the formation of Flying Columns at the outbreak of the rising are contrasted with the implications of the suspension of the Militia's annual training. The three chapters of the final section, the frequently overlooked 'Naval Sphere', examine the role of the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, and the Irish Coastguard and assess their contribution to counterinsurgency activities. While each chapter deals with a specific institution, the coordinating role of the Irish Executive is never far from the surface. The thesis concludes that without vigorous Executives, led by lords Wodehouse and Naas respectively, to coordinate the disparate branches of state power, the suppression of Fenianism would have been significantly more problematic.

Acknowledgements

It's only at the end of a PhD, with some small amount of time to reflect on a daunting and draining process, that one begins to understand the enormity of the debt that every doctoral candidate accumulates. If an army marches on its stomach, then truly the PhD student marches sustained by the encouragement of their friends, colleagues, and family.

I consider myself incalculably lucky to have found two incredible supervisors in David Dickson and Ciarán O'Neill. As I have described them often, they're the old sage on the brink of retirement, who has seen and done it all, and the rising star at the start of his career. Their enthusiasm, generosity of time, and startling scholarship have stood as a beacon to their bungling, but well-intentioned student. Their patience in the face of my never-ending stream of crises was astonishing, while the insights they offered on my work were always constructive, thoughtful, and useful. My time as a PhD student was unconventional, with periods of full-time and part-time study, as well as a year off books – they stuck by me through it all. Thank you. Equally, my examiners, Professor Eunan O'Halpin and Dr. Niall Whelehan, made the viva process a genuine pleasure. It was eminently clear that they engaged with my work in a constructive and professional manner, offering useful suggestions for the post-viva world. For this I am most grateful.

Throughout the five years of study I was lucky enough to strike upon a good vein of funding, without which the undertaking would have been impossible. I am indebted to the Irish Research Council's 'Government of Ireland' Postgraduate Scholarship (2013-15), the Irish-Canadian University Foundation's 'Dobbin Scholarship' at the University of Toronto in the summer of 2013, and for smaller grants and prizes from the Irish Legal History Society, the Alan Villiers Postgraduate Essay Prize in Naval History, the Society for Army Historical Research, the Society for the Study of Nineteenth Century Ireland, and the Society for Military History's 'Russell Weighley' Postgraduate Award. At my home institution I was awarded Trinity Trust and Leland Lyons travelling scholarships

that facilitated travel to archives and conferences, and was awarded the Thesis-in-Three prize in 2014.

I have been welcomed with inestimable good cheer wherever I've travelled to archives by friends who never (visibly) tired of my ramblings. In London, my brother-in-law Stephen Banville and brother-in-arms Kevin Murphy made my long stints in the British Library and Kew more like holidays than work. In Edinburgh, Sophie Cooper and Joe Curran provided entertainment and useful advice. In Washington, Vanessa and Simon Carswell opened their doors to an old friend. In Kansas City, Will O'Brien and Tod Rathbone flew the Norwich University flag proudly beside me. In Oxford, Blake Ewing ensured my extended trips to the Bodleian involved the High Table experience at Oriel and provided sound advice, a comfortable bed, and perceptive comments throughout. To these, and the other unnamed, but equally helpful hosts, I am eternally grateful.

For the push in the right direction that was needed at the conclusion of my Masters, I am most grateful to Dr John Broom, of Norwich University, Vermont, USA. Elsewhere, Dr Richard Dunley in Kew, Commander BJ Armstrong at the US Naval Academy and staff and students in the University of Portsmouth helped me navigate the tricky waters of naval history, and showed great humanity to a struggling postgrad. Professor Andrew Lambert was generous with his time in the early stages of this process, and saved me countless weeks of archival dithering. Professor Padraic Kennedy was kind enough to share some of his insights into the Irish Constabulary, saving me equally long archival stints. In Canada, David Wilson, Peter Vronsky, and Brian Jenkins shared their time and insight over numerous pleasant meetings. Dr William Butler's insights into the Irish Militia helped to consolidate my understanding of that idiosyncratic organization. I also extend my thanks to the many unnamed, and often unseen, archivists and librarians I depended upon along the way.

I am very grateful to the management of The King's Hospital, Palmerstown, for granting me a two-year career break during which the lion's share of my work was completed. All of the staff (except two) have been encouraging and supportive.

Andrew Deacon, Niall Mahon, and John Huggard stand out as three exceptional colleagues, to whose level of professionalism I can only aspire.

My fellow travellers on the PhD trail in Trinity have been one of the biggest surprises of a journey that I thought I would be travelling alone. Alex, Leah, Tim, Joe, Steven, (Canadian) Alex, Fionnuala, Ellie, Sarah, Neasa, Mai and many others made the journey more collegiate and enjoyable than it might otherwise have been. To Mary Hatfield, in particular, I offer my sincerest thanks for her friendship and proofreading ability – she is destined for great things as she transfers to Oxford and beyond. The ‘lads’ from Malahide, Steo ‘17, Clinchy, and above all Conor Toolan (whose wizardry with an Excel spread sheet made my life far easier), have been an invaluable outlet from the toil of everyday life. Sarah Ling was “The Mary” throughout.

I started my PhD with two children, but ended it with four. To Kate (11), Eoin (8), Oisín (3), and baby Aindriú (who arrived in the midst of my post-viva correction), I apologize for the times when it was necessary to prioritize my footnotes ahead of your needs; to each I dedicate a section of this thesis, that you don’t ever actually have to read (Aindriú gets the Conclusion). I hope to make up for lost time in the coming years. It turns out that it *is* possible to write large chunks of a PhD thesis while sitting in the car park outside your daughter’s gymnastics classes...

Irene and Johnny Devitt, my mum and brother, have shown me unwavering support of every kind imaginable. It would have been utterly impossible to achieve this feat without both of you. My mother and father-in-law, Tony and Emily Banville have been understanding, encouraging, and suitably acerbic throughout.

Above all, however, my eternal gratitude is due to my long-suffering, but amazing and beautiful wife and best friend Niamh, who I have frustrated more often than I care to remember. Her intelligence, wit, kindness, and determination have been as much of an inspiration as my DIY skills have been a disappointment. There are simply no words sufficient to express my love for her. She will, I feel, be glad to see the back of this thesis...

Dedication

For Da

- I hope you would have been proud...

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List of Abbreviations

Adm	Admiral
ADM	Admiralty Papers
BL	British Library
Bodl	Bodleian Library, Oxford
C/S	Chief Secretary
Capt	Captain
CBS	Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies
CHCD	Canadian House of Commons Debate
CSORP	Chief Secretary's Office, Registers Papers
DAG	Deputy Adjutant General
DMP	Dublin Metropolitan Police
FO	Foreign Office
GOC	General Officer Commanding
HC	House of Commons
HCSA	Habeas Corpus Suspension Act
HE	His Excellency
HL	House of Lords
HO	Home Office
IC	Irish Constabulary
IGM	Inspector General of Militia
IGM(I)	Inspector General of Militia (Ireland)
IRB	Irish Republican Brotherhood
JAG	Judge Advocate General
Kim	Kimberley Papers
LAC	Library Archives Canada, Ottawa
LCA	Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty
Lieut	Lieutenant
MS	Manuscript
NAI	National Archives of Ireland
NAM	National Army Museum
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration, USA

NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
NLI	National Library of Ireland
NLS	National Library of Scotland
NMM	National Maritime Museum, Greenwich
NMRN	National Museum of the Royal Navy
PRONI	Public Records Office, Northern Ireland
Pvt	Private
RMA	Royal Marine Artillery
RMLI	Royal Marine Light Infantry
RMM	Royal Marines Museum, Gosport
TNA	The National Archives, Kew
U/S	Under Secretary
WO	War Office

Editorial Note

This thesis is largely based on primary source materials examined and transcribed from the papers of contemporary political and military figures between 1840 and 1870. A small percentage of the documentary materials were clearly copied by amanuenses, but the vast majority came directly from the hands of the figures themselves. For the sake of clarity and consistency the passages reproduced below have been silently regularized in terms of capitalization. Very occasionally commas have been silently added to the text to aid in the understanding of otherwise very dense prose.

The naming conventions throughout the thesis are particularly problematic. Given the effective resetting of the chronology at the start of each chapter, the continual changing of titles has been viewed as unnecessarily confusing. Where the author feels that the flow of the argument would be unnecessarily occluded by shifting titles, the original names have been retained. This is particularly the case with Lord Wodehouse (Earl of Kimberley) and General Sir Hugh Rose (Baron Strathnairn). A full description of their careers is provided within the main body of the text.

Introduction

Let it be always borne in mind that if the Government really and earnestly desire to put down Fenianism and pacify Ireland—and are not merely anxious to maintain an odious supremacy in this country—there is a way of accomplishing that end more certainly, more effectually, more peaceably, than by swearing in special constables, by setting up tests of loyalty, surrounding our coasts with fleets of war, crowding our garrisons with soldiers, or choking our jails with political prisoners.¹

With the Fenian Rising of February and March 1867 looming large, *The Nation* newspaper identified the wide range of measures taken by the Irish Executive to deter the possibility of all-out insurrection and suppress the transatlantic Fenian movement. Throughout the extensive work on Fenianism, however, a detailed examination of the full range of the government’s military preparations has been lacking. As Matthew Kelly noted of the most recent and otherwise comprehensive contribution to the field, Brian Jenkins’ *The Fenian Problem: Insurgency and Terrorism in a Liberal State, 1858-1874*, “The politics of this [period] are well drawn, although it is evident that more research is needed on the implementation of these measures, which might reveal a great deal about the capacities of the mid-Victorian state.”² It is precisely this gap in the historiography that this thesis seeks to fill. Despite the rhetorical tendency to downplay the threat posed by Fenianism, both in the 1860s and in subsequent histories, this thesis proposes that the measures implemented by the Irish Executive demonstrated the seriousness of the threat they judged Fenianism to potentially pose. The government’s actions, it is suggested, speak louder than its words.

While the thesis focuses its attention on a narrowly banded period of time between 1864 and 1868, it places the state’s actions in the context of the direct reaction to and suppression of the 1848 Young Ireland Rising. It does this not only because of the parallels that emerged as the research progressed, but because the counterinsurgency efforts under interrogation were planned by contemporary

¹ *The Nation*, 8 Dec., 1866.

² Matthew Kelly, review of “*The Fenian Problem: Insurgency and Terrorism in a Liberal State, 1858-1874*”, *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 49, No. 1 (January 2010), 197.

leaders, both civil and military, by continually referring to the precedent of the last crisis. The government also viewed the problem in a broader transnational context, looking to their experiences around the British Empire and the Atlantic world to gain a better understanding of the steps that needed to be taken. What emerges for the 1860s is a practice of 'counterinsurgency off the shelf'. Those tasked with planning for the possibility of a rising looked to the experiences of their predecessors in Ireland, and contemporaries around the globe, for guidance that could be adapted to tackle the changing political, military, and technological landscape they faced. The thesis concludes its interrogation with the end of what might be called the 'conventional' phase of Fenianism, before its attention shifted towards its proto-terroristic dynamite campaigns. It focuses on aspects of the government's counterinsurgency efforts, rather than its counterterrorist response, a caveat that this thesis is conscious to assert.

The most significant impediment to forming an understanding of the nature of the counterinsurgency response to Fenianism is that the reaction was the outcome of the combined responses of multiple organizations whose responsibilities, capabilities, and jurisdictions overlapped, often extensively. Moreover, these different organizations were accountable to different structures within the imperial system, a problem compounded by the oft-debated ambiguous position of Ireland within the British Empire.³ The Irish Executive nominally held direct sway over the Irish Constabulary and Dublin Metropolitan Police, but this was only achieved through collaboration with the Home Office. The British Army in Ireland responded directly to requests from the civil government and magistrates, but was appointed by and was ultimately responsible to both the Commander-in-Chief in the Horse Guards and the Secretary of State for War in Cabinet. The Irish Militia was nominally commanded by the Lord Lieutenant, but in practical terms it was provisioned and paid for by the War Office, and was subordinate to the Inspector General of Militia of the UK. The branches responsible for the

³ For recent contributions to the debate, see amongst others, Kevin Kenny, ed., *Ireland and the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Michael De Nie and Joe Cleary, eds., 'Editors' Introduction', *Eire-Ireland* 42, no. 1 & 2 (Spring/Summer 2007): 5–10; Stephen Howe, 'Questioning the (Bad) Question: "Was Ireland a Colony?"', *Irish Historical Studies* 36, no. 142 (November 2008): 138–52; Stephen Howe, 'Minding the Gaps: New Directions in the Study of Ireland and Empire', *Journal of Imperial & Commonwealth History* 37, no. 1 (March 2009): 135–49.

maintenance of maritime security, the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, and the Coastguard, were all sub-sections of the Admiralty, but were commanded in Ireland by the Rear Admiral based in Queenstown who, theoretically at least, was completely independent of the Irish Executive. Even the law officers (Attorneys and Solicitors General) who acted under the direction of the Irish Executive were, to all intents and purposes, subordinate to the English law officers. To try and understand government policy, therefore, this thesis adopts a multi-perspective approach that considers a series of interconnected systems. The workings of each element of the system are explored insofar as this helps to understand their interaction with other branches of state power, and the manner in which they were managed by the Irish Executive.

With a defensive system that relied on so many loosely integrated nodes, the guarantee of safety from internal and external threat rested heavily on the shoulders of a proactive Executive, which *de facto* coordinated all of these elements. In many ways, the presence of at least one dynamic figure in each of the Liberal and Conservative administrators, Lords Wodehouse and Naas respectively, was the single most significant factor in deterring and defeating the Fenian conspiracy. Both men worked closely with the *éminence grise*, Under Secretary Sir Thomas Larcom, who undoubtedly contributed to this success. Thus, while many of the institutions discussed in this thesis were responsible for activities throughout the empire, and far from Ireland, the largely successful Executive maximized the available resources and secured additional assets when required. This was largely achieved in a bipartisan manner, where “parties were forgotten, rivalries were thrown aside, as if in the presence of an imperious necessity”, as was referred to in the response to the suspension of *Habeas Corpus*.⁴

The level of administrative cooperation needed to guarantee Irish security was extremely high in the 1860s, and was only partially achieved. General Officer Commanding (GOC) in Ireland, Sir Hugh Rose, set out his idea in 1865 for a coordinated system of defence to the Lord Lieutenant, noting that it would be

⁴ *Daily Express*, 2 Feb., 1866.

... a good plan if these steamers, or the gunboats watching the line of coast in question were to make signals to the police & coast guard watching the same coast on shore, should they get a sight of the movements of these Fenian steamers.

The police and coast guard would repeat the signal to the interior whose troops, stationed so as to be able to make by the shortest lines the points of the coast, where the arms would be disembarked, might seize them.⁵

General Rose's phrasing is ineloquent, but his intention is clear. To deter and defeat the Fenians, all of the branches of the state's civil and military power should be integrated effectively. While the organisation of this thesis necessitates discussing each branch of state power in relative isolation, the cooperation and coordination between and across governmental departments is a continuous theme that emerges from the primary sources.

The Fenian Threat

In order to understand the nature of the threat posed by Fenianism, a brief précis of the organization is required. The secret, oath-bound organization was founded in March 1858, and was derived in part from the Skibbereen 'Phoenix Society'. The organization had two parallel branches, James Stephens' "Irish Republican Brotherhood" (IRB) in Ireland and John O'Mahony's "Fenian Brotherhood" founded in America shortly afterwards. For consistency, this thesis uses the term 'Fenian' to describe both organizations, as this is the terminology employed almost exclusively by the Irish Executive throughout the source documentation.⁶ Although the continuity of lineage has recently been contested, the Fenians drew upon concepts and membership of earlier organizations, such as the Young Irelanders at home and the Irish Republican Union and Emmet Memorial Association in the United States.⁷ The American Fenians grew rapidly as the US Civil War drew to a close in 1864-5, with a cohort of military veterans and officers (both Federal and

⁵ General Rose to Lord Wodehouse, 9 Sept., 1865. Kimberley Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford (hereafter Bodl., Kim). MS Eng C 4031, 58-65.

⁶ Lord Lieutenant Wodehouse occasionally substituted the work "Brotherhood" in his personal correspondence, but he doesn't appear to use this to differentiate between the Irish and American branches of the organization. See for example, Wodehouse to Sir George Grey, 4 Feb., 1866. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C, 36-7.

⁷ James Quinn, 'The IRB and Young Ireland: Varieties of Tension', in *The Black Hand of Republicanism: Fenianism in Modern Ireland* (Dublin ; Portland, OR: Irish Academic Press, 2009), 3-17.

Confederate) seeing themselves well placed to return to Ireland to liberate their homeland. Although judging the precise number of members in each organization is highly problematic (with both branches claiming grossly inflated numbers) contemporary estimates varied between 18,000 to 70,000 Irish members,⁸ and approximately 28,000 American Fenians “under arms” at the end of the US Civil War, but with four or five times those numbers open sympathisers.⁹

The organization was structured along continental revolutionary lines. Independent cells were commanded by a ‘Centre’ (or ‘A’), with 820 men under his command, although some ‘Circles’ swelled to almost 2,000 men. Under the command of each Centre were nine ‘Captains’ (‘Bs’) who in turn were responsible for nine ‘Sergeants’ (‘Cs’) who had responsibility for nine-man units populated by ‘Ds’. In theory, this structure would insulate the organization from the perennial problem of infiltration by spies and informers. E.R.R. Green, however, has noted that, “the rules that members should know only the men in his own section was largely ignored from the start.”¹⁰ Stephens and O’Mahony served as the respective “Head Centres” for the two organizations, though the American branch split into two wings, the O’Mahony and Robert’s (Senate) Wings, in mid-October 1865. This split was motivated by charges of financial corruption and the failure of Stephens and O’Mahony to make good on their promise that 1865 would be the ‘Year of Action’.¹¹ The organization’s mouthpiece was the *Irish People* newspaper. A raid on its offices in September 1865 yielded valuable intelligence that led to the establishment of a Special Commission to prosecute its proprietors, though the subsequent arrest of James Stephens was tarnished by his escape from Richmond Bridewell later that year.

While Fenianism is now a well-understood phenomenon, it is important to remember that the Irish Executive was slow in forming its own understanding of

⁸ Brian Jenkins, *The Fenian Problem: Insurgency and Terrorism in a Liberal State, 1858-1874* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), 30–31.

⁹ Mabel G. Walker, *The Fenian Movement* (Colorado Springs, CO: Ralph Myles Pub, 1969), 17; Leon Ó Broin, *Fenian Fever: An Anglo-American Dilemma* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1971), 3.

¹⁰ T. W. Moody, *The Fenian Movement*, Thomas Davis 3s5i Lectures (Cork: Mercier Press, 1968), 17.

¹¹ Robert Kee, *The Green Flag, Volume II - The Bold Fenian Men* (London: Penguin Books, 1972), 28–29; Patrick Steward and Bryan McGovern, *The Fenians: Irish Rebellion in the North Atlantic World, 1858-1876* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2013), 86–90.

the precise nature of the opposition it faced. The sources of intelligence upon which the Executive relied varied dramatically, and were often contradictory. From America, voluminous newspaper clippings, Consular reports, and documentation seized from recently arrived or returning Irish-Americans provided growing insight into the nature of the Fenian threat.¹² Domestically, informants, constabulary reports, and information from Resident Magistrates provided a steady stream of intelligence that contributed to the Executive's growing understanding of its enemy. The historiography tends to view Fenianism along a spectrum. R.V. Comerford's influential "Patriotism as Pastime" thesis views Fenianism as primarily a social outlet that "scarcely posed any great threat to the *Pax Britannica*".¹³ By contrast, concentrating on the Fenian invasions of Canada led Hereward Senior to highlight the more active military components of the organization.¹⁴ More recent work on Fenianism by Steward and McGovern has moved towards a middle ground that recognizes that, "the movement primarily appealed to men in search of an adventurous way to enhance their economic prospects and to prove their manhood. But more importantly, it gave them an outlet to express their anti-British sentiment, through the threat of physical force."¹⁵

The Fenian threat was predicated on the mobilization of its membership to affect a rebellion in Ireland. Regardless of the precise numbers or of the rhetorical tendency of the Executive to downplay the threat posed by the Fenians, anxiety remained. While the Executive doubted the ability of the movement to successfully organize a transatlantic filibustering expedition that could pose an existential threat to British rule in Ireland, it was important to deny the Fenians small early

¹² Consular Reports were compiled through the Foreign Office "Fenian Brotherhood" papers. See TNA, FO5/1334-43 (covering the years 1863-8). Collated clipping compose numerous volumes of the Kimberley, Naas, and Larcom papers. See for example, Bodl., Kim. MS Eng D, 2440-51; MS Eng C 4123; NLI, Larcom Papers, MS 7,675-95. For copies of seized documents see, NLI, Mayo Papers. MS 11,188 /22-3 and NLI, Larcom Papers, 7,586 and 7,694.

¹³ R. V. Comerford, 'Patriotism as Pastime: The Appeal of Fenianism in the Mid-1860s', *Irish Historical Studies* 22, no. 87 (March 1981): 239-50; R. V. Comerford, *The Fenians in Context: Irish Politics and Society, 1848-82* (Dublin: Wolfhound, 1985), 8.

¹⁴ Hereward Senior, *The Last Invasion of Canada: The Fenian Raids, 1866-1870* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2012); Hereward Senior, *The Fenians and Canada* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1978); See also, Peter Vronsky, *Ridgeway: The American Fenian Invasion and the 1866 Battle That Made Canada* (Toronto: Penguin Global, 2012).

¹⁵ Steward and McGovern, *The Fenians: Irish Rebellion in the North Atlantic World, 1858-1876.*, xviii.

victories that might embolden their supporters. General Rose explained his military dilemma to Lord Lieutenant Wodehouse by noting,

They will not take the open, the field – they have not the courage, or means for that – but are ready for a torpedo, a mining explosion or any treacherous destructive [sic]; and if that succeeded, they might try something more extensive... The leaders of the disaffected are Irishmen who have learnt a certain amount of strategy in a great Civil War, and the means of destruction is a struggle which had no pretensions to the *guerre courtoise* [chivalric warfare].¹⁶

In this context, sound precautions had to be implemented to deny Fenianism a military foothold from which a rallying call might go out. It is the nature of these preparations that is the primary preoccupation of this thesis.

Methodology

Rather than continue with the current trend of analysing Fenian actions by asking “Why did the Fenians fail?”, this thesis shifts perspective and instead asks, “Why did the British succeed so emphatically?” This involves looking beyond the internal problems within Fenianism, particularly at a time when the transatlantic Fenian movement was expanding significantly, and instead examining the defensive system they were due to face. The argument presented is heavily influenced by three concepts: Michael Mann’s examination of the “Infrastructural Power” of the state; the practice of viewing Irish history from a transnational perspective; and the growing theoretical work surrounding the modern concept of counterinsurgency. These are woven into the texture of the thesis, with specific space allocated to transnational perspectives at numerous points. Rather than viewing these concepts as requiring rigid categorization of the Irish Executive’s actions, they are used as theoretical lenses that generate interesting questions with which to interrogate the source material and existing literature.

Infrastructural Power

The first concept, the state’s “infrastructural power”, was described by Mann as “the capacity of the state actually to penetrate civil society, and to implement

¹⁶ General Rose to Lord Wodehouse, 11 Feb., 1866. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,822, 1-8. Original emphasis.

logistically political decisions throughout the realm.”¹⁷ This term might be further deconstructed into its constituent elements, namely the state’s “capabilities” (resources potentially at the states disposal), the “weight of state” (what is actually deployed by the state); and the “subnational variations of power” (the degree to which power penetrates into isolated areas of the territory).¹⁸ These three elements inform the general structure of each chapter, where establishing the true level of resources available to the Irish Executive, its ability to deploy those resources against the Fenians, and to what extent they were successfully deployed around the country and off its coasts, create a logical structure against which the capabilities of the mid-Victorian state can be assessed.

For Mann, the sources of the state’s power were fourfold: military, political, economic, and ideological.¹⁹ While this thesis focuses, by design, on military power, the broader ramifications of the political and economic factors are never far from consideration. This is particularly important in the context of financial retrenchment that was such a significant component in the governance of the United Kingdom, and Ireland in particular, throughout the 1850s and 1860s.²⁰ The ideological component of the state’s power examined here centres around the idea of classical Liberalism, as articulated by John Stuart Mill, both in its theoretical form and in its practical application, such as in the parliamentary debates surrounding the 1866 suspension of *Habeas Corpus* in which he participated.²¹

Wary of the limitations of Mann’s conceptualization of state power, the author agrees with J.M. Whitmeyer that, “much political power in society is held and exerted without any coherent purpose by the system, that is, by the state apparatus.”²² Rather than relying simply on the political rhetoric of the day, the thesis seeks to continue the process outlined by Patrick Joyce, who has argued

¹⁷ Michael Mann, “The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and Results,” *European Journal of Sociology / Archives Européennes de Sociologie* 25, no. 02 (1984): 185.

¹⁸ Michael Mann, ‘Infrastructural Power Revisited’, *St Comp Int Dev*, no. 43 (2008): 37.

¹⁹ Mann, 358.

²⁰ K. Theodore Hoppen, *Governing Hibernia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 154–76.

²¹ John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty and Other Essays*, ed. John Grey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); John Stuart Mill, *England and Ireland* (London: Longmans, Green, Reader and Dyer, 1868).

²² J.M. Whitmeyer, ‘Mann’s Theory of Power - A (Sympathetic) Critique’, *The British Journal of Sociology* 48, no. 2 (June 1997): 210.

cogently that to gain a full understanding of the workings of the Victorian state is to examine “what the state did, how it worked, its mundane operations”, although the process undertaken here is an examination of the persistence of mundane operations in progressively more exceptional circumstances.²³ In this way we focus on the operation of the state as it approaches an ‘*état de siège*’ (state of siege), such as that described by the work of Giorgio Agamben, who considers the situation, highly relevant to nineteenth-century Ireland, where “the state of exception... has become the rule”.²⁴ By engaging with the work of Agamben, the thesis aims to place the 1866 suspension of *Habeas Corpus* on a continuum that begins with the classical liberal state and tracks the erosion of civil liberties throughout the West.

Transnationalism

The second concept to influence the nature of the investigation heavily is the relatively recent pivot towards a transnational view of Irish history, a process already well under way in the historiography of other nations.²⁵ As Christopher Bayly describes it, transnationalism might be generally defined as being concerned with “movements, flows, and circulation, not simply as a theme or motif but as an analytical set of methods which defines the endeavour itself.”²⁶ The concept is developed by Matthew Connolly who notes that the late nineteenth century might be rendered as a “period of unprecedented movements in capital, goods, people, and ideas,” a description that conspicuously applies to Ireland in this period.²⁷ In this vein, R.V. Comerford has highlighted the French influences on the formative period of Fenianism in the late 1850s, a process expanded upon by Niall Whelehan who has broadened the range of influences to include influences of Blanquism, the

²³ Patrick Joyce, *The State of Freedom: A Social History of the British State since 1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 1.

²⁴ Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 6–7.

²⁵ Ian Tyrrell, ‘AHR Forum: American Exceptionalism in an Age of International History’, *American Historical Review* 96 (October 1991): 1031–55; Ian Tyrrell, ‘Reflections on the Transnational Turn in United States History: Theory and Practice’, *Journal of Global History* 4, no. 3 (2009): 453–74.

²⁶ C.A. Bayly et al., ‘AHR Conversation: On Transnational History’, *The American Historical Review* 111, no. No. 5 (December 2006): 1441.

²⁷ Bayly et al., 1457.

Italian Risorgimento, as well as other continental revolutionary and anarchist movements who embraced the “propaganda of the deed”.²⁸

Synthesizing the work of Michael Mann with the goal of “reconstructing the dynamics of power in late modern Ireland”, Enda Delaney notes that any list of potential subjects should include the idea of “militarisation”.²⁹ Whereas Whelehan and others place the British government’s reaction to the Dynamiters of the 1880s in its imperial context, this thesis continues that process by examining the inherently imperial and transnational influences on the defensive measures of the 1860s.³⁰ It deconstructs the term militarization to balance the militarization inherent in Irish physical-force nationalism with the reciprocal militarization of Irish society that emerged in the resulting defensive actions. This thesis argues, therefore, that flow of “capital, goods, people, and ideas” is as evident in the imperially influenced defensive policies in Ireland as it is in the well-understood transnational structures of and influences on Fenianism itself.

Ciarán O’Neill and Enda Delaney have noted the growth of monographs and journal articles that seek to redress the imbalances implicit in Irish historiography, and borrow Niall Whelehan’s depiction of this process as “playing with the scales”.³¹ This thesis sets out to contribute to this trend, as the author has already done with regard to other aspects of imperial defence against Fenianism in the Atlantic world.³² A rebalanced view of Irish defence that allocates a substantial section to the role of naval power is justified by Delaney’s assertion that

²⁸ R.V. Comerford, ‘Anglo-French Tensions and the Origins of Fenianism’, in *Ireland Under the Union - Varieties of Tension*, ed. F.S.L. Lyons and R.A.J. Hawkins (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 149–71; Niall Whelehan, *The Dynamiters: Irish Nationalism and Political Violence in the Wider World, 1867-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 46–59; Niall Whelehan, ‘Skirmishing, The Irish World, and Empire, 1876-86’, *Éire-Ireland* 41:1 & 2 (Spr/Sum 07): 180–200.

²⁹ Enda Delaney, ‘Directions in Historiography. Our Island Story? Towards a Transnational History of Late Modern Ireland’, *Irish Historical Studies* XXXVII, no. 148 (November 2011): 101.

³⁰ Whelehan, *The Dynamiters*; Shane Kenna, *War in the Shadows: The Irish-American Fenians Who Bombed Victorian Britain* (Irish Academic Press, 2014); Jonathan Gantt, *Irish Terrorism in the Atlantic Community, 1865-1922* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Steward and McGovern, *The Fenians: Irish Rebellion in the North Atlantic World, 1858-1876*.

³¹ Ciaran O’Neill and Enda Delaney, eds., ‘Introduction: Beyond the Nation, Special Issue.’, *Éire-Ireland* 51, no. 1 & 2 (Spring/Summer 2016): 11–12; Niall Whelehan, *Transnational Perspectives on Modern Irish History* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

³² Jerome Devitt, ‘Fenianism’s Bermuda Footprint: Revolutionary Nationalism in the Victorian Empire’, *Eire-Ireland* Vol. 51, no. 1 & 2 (Spring/Summer 2016): 141–70.

transnational methodology “stresses connections and interactions, as well as seeing bodies of water as linking people and places rather than marking out boundaries and divisions.”³³ Christopher Harvey’s description of promontories and headlands as “kinetic places, suggesting the relativities of existence” is particularly compelling relative to the Royal Navy and Coastguard, but also applies to the perspective of the administrators within the Irish Executive who looked to the empire as a way of guaranteeing Irish internal security.³⁴ This thesis, therefore, mirrors the approach of Barry Crosbie who has sought to examine the “cross-cultural experiences, ideologies, institutions, and personnel”, but assesses the impact of imperial practices on Ireland, rather than just Irish contributions to those practices.³⁵

Counterinsurgency

The final methodological influence, the theory and practice of counterinsurgency, has been highly contested. It is engaged with here partly from necessity and partly for convenience. The necessity lies in the need to engage with ideas of sufficient terminological familiarity so as to make them compatible and intelligible to other periods and theatres. The convenience extends to the fact that in many ways the “General Orders” issued by General Sir Hugh Rose in 1867 might be comfortably classified as a set of proto-counterinsurgency doctrines.³⁶ Often referred to as COIN for short, counterinsurgency theories have received significant critical attention of late, particularly in light of recent US and British failures in Iraq and Afghanistan. A general working definition is provided by the US Department of State, which describes the “comprehensive civilian and military efforts taken to simultaneously defeat and contain insurgency and address its root causes.”³⁷ This description self-evidently embraces both political and military activities in a

³³ Delaney, ‘Directions in Historiography. Our Island Story? Towards a Transnational History of Late Modern Ireland’, 88.

³⁴ Christopher Harvie, *A Floating Commonwealth: Politics, Culture, and Technology on Britain’s Atlantic Coast, 1860-1930* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 58.

³⁵ Barry Crosbie, *Irish Imperial Networks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 2.

³⁶ Commander of the Forces in Ireland Strathnairn Baron and Colonel Mackenzie Deputy Adjutant-General Kenneth, ‘General Orders for the Guidance of the Troops in Affording Aid to the Civil Power in Ireland’ (Dublin, Alexander Thom and Co., 1870).

³⁷ *U.S. Government Counterinsurgency Guide*. Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, Department of State. 2009. Retrieved 26 January 2017.

manner that would have been easily recognizable to Lord Lieutenant Wodehouse, who was described as “supporting simultaneous measures for stringent law enforcement and redress of grievances.”³⁸

The theoretical approach, however, is far from new, with Edward Callwell, an Anglo-Irish officer in the British Army, writing *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice* as early as 1898. Within this highly popular book-cum-training-manual, Callwell sought to describe the principles that operated behind “all campaigns other than those where both the opposing sides consist of regular troops”, including the “quelling of sedition and of insurrections in civilized countries”, a category into which the conflict between Fenianism and the British military forces sits happily.³⁹ Although Callwell does not mention Fenianism by name, near-contemporary conflicts such as the Indian Mutiny (1857) and the Spanish invasion of Morocco (1859) are discussed, and they provide sufficient context to be useful in this instance.⁴⁰ As is apparent by the range of locations explored by Callwell and others, this aspect of military practice (and its absorption into the writing of military history) is inherently transnational.

Subsequent iterations of the theory emerged, with shifting terminology, notably David Galula’s recent *Counter-insurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, which provide useful observations that equate clearly with the condition of mid-Victorian Ireland.⁴¹ Galula describes both “cold” and “hot” revolutionary wars and notes that the “essential problem for the counterinsurgent stems from the fact that the actual danger will always appear to the nation as out of proportion to the demands made by an adequate response”, another sentiment that would have chimed with Wodehouse. He perennially bemoaned the fact that he was “quite sure

³⁸ John Powell, ed., *Liberal by Principle: The Politics of John Wodehouse, 1st Earl of Kimberley, 1843-1902*, Sources for Modern British History (London: Historians’ Press, 1996), 22.

³⁹ Charles Edward Callwell and Great Britain, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice* (London: Printed for H. M. Stationery Office, by Harrison and Sons, 1906), 21–22.

⁴⁰ Callwell and Great Britain, 22.

⁴¹ David Galula, *Counter-Insurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (New York: Frederick A Praeger, Inc., 1964); See also, David Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency* (London: C. Hurst, 2010).

we have troops enough to suppress any such mad [Fenian] attempts; I am not by any means so sure that we have enough to prevent it.”⁴²

Throughout this thesis “counterinsurgency” is referred to not as a strictly delineated set of instructions or checklists, as has been attempted elsewhere, but rather as indicative of the broad approach adopted by the Irish Executive and its senior military commanders throughout the mid and late 1860s.⁴³ In so doing, it concurs with Colin Grey’s assertion that “COIN is neither a concept nor can it be a strategy. Instead, it is simply an acronymic description of a basket of diverse activities intended to counter an insurgency.”⁴⁴ Part III of the dissertation engages with Carlos Alfaro Zaforteza’s specific sub-categorizations of “naval counterinsurgency”, and it does so to provide an overarching structural framework with which to assess and engage with the codification of a newly emerging field (to which the author has also contributed elsewhere).⁴⁵ In many ways, all three concepts are inherently linked, because the Irish Executive’s attempt to assert the state’s infrastructural power in a transnational context might well be considered as central to the practice of modern counterinsurgency.

The Irish Executive

This thesis focuses on the ability of the Irish Executive to coordinate the disparate branches of state power that were available to suppress Fenianism. The Executive consisted of the Lord Lieutenant, the peer who represented the Monarch, and the parliamentary representative, the Chief Secretary (C/S), who was usually, though not always, a member of the British Cabinet. These two positions were supported by the Under Secretary (U/S) who headed the civil service in Dublin Castle, but who also often “exercised power out of proportion to his place within the

⁴² Galula, *Counter-Insurgency Warfare*, 47. Lord Wodehouse to Earl de Grey (War Office), 17 Jan., 1866. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4040, 7-9.

⁴³ See, for example, Christopher Paul, ‘Counterinsurgency Scorecard: Afghanistan in Early 2011 Relative to the Insurgencies of the Past 30 Years’, *Occasional Paper - RAND National Defense Research Institute*, 2011; Headquarters, Department of the Army, *Field Manual ‘FM 3-24’ Counterinsurgency* (Washington D.C., 2006).

⁴⁴ Colin Gray, ‘Concept Failure? COIN, Counterinsurgency, and Strategic Theory’, *Prism: A Journal of the Center for Complex Operations and Strategic Theory* 3, no. 3 (2012): 17.

⁴⁵ Carlos Alfaro Zaforteza, ‘Sea Power, State and Society in Liberal Spain, 1833-68’ (PhD, King’s College, London, 2011); Jerome Devitt, ‘The “Navalization” of Ireland. The Royal Navy and Irish Insurrection in the 1840s’, *The Mariner’s Mirror* 101, no. 4 (November 2015): 388-409.

administrative hierarchy.”⁴⁶ It was often difficult to fill these roles with men of adequate ability. Thomas Jordan has noted that responsibility for the “implementation of government policy was in the hands of people in whom talent for administration was a fortuitous event”, lacking as it did “institutionalized mechanisms for recruiting, evaluating and retaining career bureaucrats.”⁴⁷ To effectively suppress Fenianism required the mobilization of a heavily centralized administration to work in tandem with the Cabinet in Westminster to tame the messy system of Union governance, bemoaned so often by its incumbents for its clumsiness. This correlates well with Mann’s description of the “bureaucratic state”, which has “a high organizational capacity, yet cannot set its own goals; ... [it] is controlled by others, civil society groups, but their decisions once taken are enforceable through the state’s infrastructure.”⁴⁸ The fact that the Chief Secretary’s Office Registered Papers (CSORP) are by far the largest class of state papers in the National Archives of Ireland (NAI), and feature prominently throughout the thesis attests to the crucial coordinating role played by that office.

Any definition of the state is problematic when used to describe Ireland under the Act of Union. However, Mann’s definition of the state as having a “differentiated set of institutions and personnel” with “centrality” of political relations radiating outward over a “territorially demarcated area” provides an adequate approximation of the operation and jurisdiction of the Irish Executive.⁴⁹ While R.B. McDowell’s assertion that it was the “Cabinet for policy, [...] and the Lord Lieutenant for administration” holds true, the Irish Executive served, at the very least, as the primary agent of British power otherwise centralized at Westminster, and implemented those policies in cooperation with the other imperial institutions.⁵⁰ Even Under Secretary Larcom conceded that the Irish Administration was “pre-eminently a centralized government which often had to

⁴⁶ R. B. McDowell, ‘The Irish Executive in the Nineteenth Century’, *Irish Historical Studies* 9, no. 35 (March 1955): 264; R. B. McDowell, *The Irish Administration, 1801-1914* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1976).

⁴⁷ Thomas E. Jordan, ‘Two Thomases: Dublin Castle and the Quality of Life in Victorian Ireland’, *Social Indicators Research* 64, no. 2 (November 2003): 258.

⁴⁸ Mann, ‘The Autonomous Power of the State’, 191.

⁴⁹ Mann, 188.

⁵⁰ McDowell, *The Irish Administration, 1801-1914*, 56.

act with great promptitude and vigour”, with the Lord Lieutenant as the “mainspring of every movement of the central government.”⁵¹

The internal ebb and flow of power between successive Executives (and sometimes within the changing personnel of one Executive) made it a “bureaucratic enigma”, whose locus of power seemed to be in near constant flux.⁵² As Kieran Flanagan has described it, “Dublin Castle represented a pure bureaucracy of a type the English press feared and assumed to be a continental aberration.”⁵³ In this context, argues Hoppen, “much began to depend upon the forcefulness and assiduity of the individuals concerned”, rather than on a preconceived administrative hierarchy.⁵⁴ In the period under examination, the balance of power within the Wodehouse Executive was clearly and self-consciously held by the Lord Lieutenant, whereas the Marquess of Abercorn effectively relinquished control to his Chief Secretary, Lord Naas.

Lord Lieutenant Baron John Wodehouse (1826-1902)

John Wodehouse, First Earl of Kimberly from June 1866, was a central figure in the suppression of Fenianism, primarily because he was the ‘man on the spot’ during the period of the organization’s fastest growth. Born in 1826, Wodehouse was only thirty-eight years of age when he accepted the position of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, having thrived in a number of early appointments, particularly as an Under Secretary in the Foreign Office and as British Minister to Russia for a term immediately following the Crimean War.⁵⁵ Although he has yet to receive a published biography, Wodehouse has received growing historiographic attention, thanks primarily to the work of John Powell. Powell’s 1986 doctoral thesis tracked Wodehouse’s entire career, during which he described his subject as becoming “an indispensable member of every liberal government, successively heading the

⁵¹ McDowell, 68.

⁵² Kieran Flanagan, ‘The Chief Secretary’s Office, 1853-1914: A Bureaucratic Enigma’, *Irish Historical Studies* 24, no. 94 (November 1984): 197. Flanagan uses the term “Enigma” to describe the office of the Chief Secretary, but it might be equally applied to the Irish Executive as a whole.

⁵³ Flanagan, 197.

⁵⁴ K. Theodore Hoppen, ‘A Question None Could Answer: “What Was the Irish Viceroyalty For?” 1800-1921’, in *The Irish Lord Lieutenancy C. 1541-1922*, ed. Peter Gray and Olwen Purdue (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2012), 140.

⁵⁵ Jenkins, *The Fenian Problem*, 35.

Colonial, India, and Foreign Offices... praised for his wide knowledge, quick application and great skill”, though the thesis devoted just sixteen pages to his significant, but relatively short viceroyalty in Ireland.⁵⁶ The publication of selected correspondence with a fifty-page introduction and the subsequent publication of his personal and political journal have provided novel insights into the operation of the Victorian state in both Britain and Ireland.⁵⁷

Wodehouse’s attitude to Irish affairs was tinged by his religious views. Powell and Kennedy note that he was “already intensely anti-Catholic when he married into the family of the equally zealous Protestant first Earl of Clare.”⁵⁸ His casual racism, not untypical of the time, might be best demonstrated by his comment to the new Prime Minister, Lord Russell, when he noted that “Governing Paddy has never been a hopeful or pleasant task, but it is a duty which Englishmen must perform as best they can.”⁵⁹ From 1860 onwards he compiled thirteen volumes of press clippings relating to Irish affairs, which guaranteed that by the time of his arrival at the Viceregal Lodge he was “thoroughly versed in Irish politics, committed to progressive remedies, but not very hopeful of the potential Irish contribution.”⁶⁰

Most of Wodehouse’s correspondence while Lord Lieutenant was unavailable to the early historians of Fenianism. They remained in private possession before being purchased by the Bodleian Library in 1991, meaning that influential early works on the topic, notably Ó Broin, Townshend, and Comerford, were unable to incorporate that material into their work.⁶¹ Therefore intriguing

⁵⁶ John Powell, ‘The Life of John Wodehouse, First Earl of Kimberley’ (Ph.D, Texas Tech University, 1986), 1–2. The time covered by the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland is covered between pages 87 and 103 of the thesis.

⁵⁷ Powell, *Liberal by Principle*; John Wodehouse, *The Journal of John Wodehouse First Earl of Kimberley, for 1862-1902*, ed. John Powell and Angus Hawkins, Camden Fifth Series, v. 9 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

⁵⁸ John Powell and Pádraic Kennedy, ‘Lord Kimberley and the Foundation of Liberal Irish Policy: Annotations to George Sigerson’s *Modern Ireland: Its Vital Questions, Secret Societies, and Government (1868)*’, *Irish Historical Studies* 31, no. 121 (November 1998): 94.

⁵⁹ Wodehouse to Lord Russell, 27 Oct., 1865. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4035, 36-8. This is also cited in the preamble to Hoppen’s *Governing Hibernia*.

⁶⁰ Powell and Kennedy, ‘Lord Kimberley and the Foundation of Liberal Irish Policy’, 95. The cuttings are available at: Bodl., Kim. MS Eng D, 2440-51; MS Eng C 4123.

⁶¹ Elizabeth Turner, *Catalogue of the papers, 1843-1902, of John Wodehouse, 1st Earl of Kimberley (1826-1902)*, Department of Special Collections, Bodleian Library, 1995. Introduction, 1-2. Ó Broin,

aspects of Wodehouse's viceroyalty, such as his connection with other prominent British politicians of the period, are underrated. He was a *protégée* of Lord Clarendon in the Foreign Office, who Powell describes as Wodehouse's "early mentor, who from the mid-1850s spoke regularly in favour of Kimberley's advancement."⁶² The striking parallels between Clarendon's suppression of the Young Ireland Rebellion and Wodehouse's efforts against the Fenians are explored throughout this thesis, with the similarities suggesting that Wodehouse's formative experiences in the Foreign Office had a significant bearing on his later time in Ireland. Recent work by K.T. Hoppen and the aforementioned contributions of Jenkins have deepened our understanding of the important coordinating role played by Wodehouse.⁶³

The Fenian conspiracy offered Wodehouse the opportunity to shine in the eyes of his political superiors in Cabinet, a position to which he aspired and where he would spend the majority of his later years. His overall response to Fenianism not only earned him the monarch's praise, but also an earldom by June 1866. Powell notes eloquently that, "Wodehouse's firmness pleased the Queen; his liberal attitude pleased Gladstone; and his success pleased everyone. Everyone was satisfied except, perhaps, the Fenians who had ushered him in as 'the Woodlouse' and bade him good riddance as the Earl of Kimberley."⁶⁴ His prowess as an administrator was confirmed by Sir Robert Anderson who described the new viceroy as, "the best clerk in the office" in Dublin Castle.⁶⁵ Despite amassing a considerable reputation as "Gladstone's imperial handyman" for the way in which he mastered all elements of administration, Lord Rosebery noted that Wodehouse's time in Ireland was his "best piece of work".⁶⁶

Fenian Fever; Comerford, *The Fenians in Context*; Charles Townshend, *Political Violence in Ireland: Government and Resistance since 1848* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983).

⁶² Powell, *Liberal by Principle*. Introduction, xv.

⁶³ Hoppen, 'A Question None Could Answer: "What Was the Irish Viceroyalty For?" 1800-1921'.

⁶⁴ Powell, 'The Life of John Wodehouse, First Earl of Kimberley', 102-6.

⁶⁵ Robert Anderson, *Sidelights on the Home Rule Movement* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1906), 54.

⁶⁶ Powell and Kennedy, 'Lord Kimberley and the Foundation of Liberal Irish Policy', 92; Powell, *Liberal by Principle*, 35.

Richard Southwell Bourke (1822-72), Chief Secretary

The fall of the Liberal government in the summer of 1866 brought about the requisite change in the Irish Administration, with the Marquess of Abercorn assuming the role of Lord Lieutenant and Lord Naas (the sixth Earl of Mayo from 1867) appointed as Chief Secretary. However, unlike Wodehouse's micro-management, the Marquess of Abercorn reverted to the more traditional, ceremonial role of the viceroyalty, with Naas assuming the lion's share of the day-to-day administrative tasks. To do so, he was appointed to Cabinet, a position that was commensurate with his position as *de facto* leader of the Irish Conservatives, aided by his suitably "conciliatory temperament".⁶⁷ Although the balance of power shifted within the administration, its counterinsurgency activities continued with vigour, though now with a little more focus on political considerations. Naas was undertaking his third Chief Secretaryship, having previously served under Lord Eglinton (1852 and 1858-9). During that time he had demonstrated himself to be a "diligent administrator", with Eglinton assuring the Prime Minister, the Earl of Derby, that a "more judicious and agreeable official" than Naas did not exist, though he was not a cabinet member at that stage, nor a member of the party's inner circle.⁶⁸ During his second stint as Chief Secretary he was heavily engaged in dealing with the Phoenix Conspiracy and "took over direct control of the investigation" of Daniel O'Sullivan Goula in 1858, an experience that gave him an excellent grounding in the nature of Fenianism.⁶⁹

There were numerous factors in Naas's early life and career that suited him to the Irish Executive and to dealing with Fenianism. His early exposure to Irish society, facilitated by his great uncle (the fourth Earl), familiarized him with elements of society otherwise not possible for men of limited means in his branch of the Bourke family. Time spent in London in his early twenties secured his position as a well-liked member of society, where attendance at the gatherings of

⁶⁷ R. B. McDowell, *British Conservatism, 1832-1914* (London: Faber and Faber, 1957), 68; Andrew Shields, *The Irish Conservative Party, 1852-68: Land, Politics and Religion* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2007).

⁶⁸ Alex Tyrrell, 'A Card King? The Earl of Eglinton and the Viceroyalty of Ireland', *Historian* 72, no. 4 (Winter 2010): 875.

⁶⁹ Padraic Kennedy, "'The Indispensable Informer': Daniel O'Sullivan Goula and the Phoenix Society, 1858-59", *Eire-Ireland* 45, no. 3/4 (Autumn/Winter 2010): 158.

Lady Jersey in Berkeley Square exposed him to “Tory statesmen, beauties, and wits [...] thither, too, came strangers, famous in arts or in arms, and a whole *corps diplomatique* of distinguished foreigners.”⁷⁰ In conjunction with an early grand tour in his teens and considerable time spent in Russia, Naas emerged with a far broader range of influences than might have been otherwise expected from a member of a fairly minor County Meath gentry family. This resulted in his appointment to the position of ‘Gentleman at large’ in the Viceregal court of Lord Heytesbury in 1846-7, and from there early election in the parliamentary seat for Kildare, and later Coleraine, then Cockermouth in Cumbria.⁷¹

Although not formally a military man, at eighteen years of age he had received a captain’s commission in the Kildare Militia, of which his great-uncle was the Colonel. He used this limited experience to turn “a very critical eye” on the military shortcomings in both Ireland and India.⁷² Equally significant was Naas’s interest in maritime affairs. To recover from an early “threatening consumption” he spent two months sailing on the east coast of Ireland at fifteen years of age.⁷³ As his earliest biographer, William Hunter, observed, “The love of the sea never deserted him. In after years it broke out from time to time, and great was his delight when his second son adopted the naval profession.”⁷⁴ This familiarity with maritime affairs manifested itself in his first electoral campaign in which his speeches were littered with “an array of figures, showing the shipping and imports and exports before and after the Union.”⁷⁵ Thus in his dealings with the Admiralty at the peak of the Fenian Conspiracy, particular attention was paid to matters of naval transportation and of patrolling the Irish coast.

In the summer of 1866 Naas was reappointed to cabinet for his third term as Chief Secretary, and he maintained the high standards of administration set by the previous Executive. His dealings with the Fenians led Wodehouse to comment

⁷⁰ William Wilson Hunter, *A Life of the Earl of Mayo, Fourth Viceroy of India* (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1876), 40.

⁷¹ For details of this electoral complexity see Hunter, Hunter, 60–63.

⁷² George Pottinger, *Mayo: Disraeli’s Viceroy* (Salisbury, Wiltshire: Michael Russell Publishing Ltd., 1990), 16.

⁷³ Hunter, *A Life of the Earl of Mayo, Fourth Viceroy of India*, 30.

⁷⁴ Hunter, 30.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 61.

in his *Journal* that the situation in Ireland was only salvaged because “Naas ... has a solid head on his shoulders.”⁷⁶ So successful did this period prove for Naas that he was offered the Governor Generalship of Canada before ultimately accepting the Viceroyalty of India in 1868.⁷⁷ Unfortunately for Naas, this led to his sensational assassination in 1872 and to an enormous belated funeral in Dublin, after which he became affectionately known as the ‘Pickled Earl’.⁷⁸ Naas shares an unusual connection with General Rose, beyond simply their common imperial careers in India. Owen Tudor Burne, having served as private secretary to General Rose up to 1868, took up the same position during the Viceroyalty of Naas/Earl of Mayo in India.⁷⁹ Furthermore, Burne acted as partial biographer (or perhaps hagiographer would be more suitable) for both men, which suggests the Burne’s pen may have had a significant, if under-explored impact on our understanding of these two key figures who were responsible for the successful suppression of the Fenian rising and to the imperial context of their successes.⁸⁰

Structure

The thesis is structured in three broadly conceived sections dealing with the Civil, the Military, and the Naval actions taken to deter and later to suppress Fenianism. Within each section, individual institutions are examined in dedicated chapters. Some areas, such as the legal system and the Irish Constabulary, have extensive and well-developed historiographies, whereas others, such as the Admiralty in Ireland, have been neglected in the academic literature. Each chapter contains a brief historiographical treatment of the institutions at hand, facilitating a broader understanding of the issues directly relevant to that branch of state power.

⁷⁶ Wodehouse, *The Journal of John Wodehouse First Earl of Kimberley, for 1862-1902*, 199; Timothy McMahon, ‘The Assassination and Apotheosis of the Earl of Mayo’, in *Ireland in an Imperial World: Citizenship, Opportunism, and Subversion*, ed. Timothy McMahon, Michael De Nie, and Paul Townend (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 94.

⁷⁷ Pottinger, *Mayo: Disraeli’s Viceroy*, 41.

⁷⁸ McMahon, ‘The Assassination and Apotheosis of the Earl of Mayo’, 105.

⁷⁹ Owen Tudor Burne, *Memories* (London: Edward Arnold, Publisher to the India Office, 1907), 82.

⁸⁰ Burne, *Memories*; Owen Tudor Burne, *Military Secretary and Aide de Camp to Sir H. Rose* (London: Clarendon Press, 1907); Owen Tudor Burne, *Clyde and Strathnairn, Rules of India* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1891).

The opening section of the thesis, Part I, examines the civil governance of Ireland in the build-up to the Fenian Rising. This revolves around the actions of the Irish Executive in the political sphere and the actions of its most visible component, the Irish Constabulary. Chapter One addresses the events surrounding the 1866 *Suspension of Habeas Corpus (Ireland) Act*. It considers the transition from governance under normal constitutional conditions to a progressively more martial environment where the maintenance of control was dependent on the adoption of extraordinary measures across the civil administration. It notes the continuities between Liberal and Conservative policies and their recourse to the measures undertaken in 1848 to ensure that the Irish Executive could deal with the insurrectionary threat on the government's own terms. While charting the progressive calls for suspension of the constitution from within Ireland itself, this chapter argues that the suspension underpinned many of the actions taken in the years that followed. It considers the anomalies that emerged under this extra-constitutional situation and examines the actions of the Irish Executive in a self-consciously transnational manner.

Chapter Two examines the strategic planning for and distribution of the Irish Constabulary, the most visible arm of the state. This discussion does not linger on the tactical actions taken on the ground during the attempted rising, a subject comprehensively covered in the existing literature, but instead considers the more militarized aspects of the force's actions that have thus far been ignored. In so doing, it aims to outline the considerable preparations undertaken by the Constabulary Office in advance of the rising. It highlights previously obscured parallels between the constabulary's response to the 1848 and 1867 risings. It also engages in a treatment of the previously under-explored consequences of the Constabulary's withdrawal from rural stations at the peak of the 1867 crisis. This resulted in nationwide calls for the swearing in of Special Constables who were viewed by the local gentry and loyal citizenry as the last line of defence, particularly in isolated rural communities that understandably felt threatened by the Fenians.

Part II seeks to interrogate the changing roles of the two overtly military elements in anti-Fenian counterinsurgency – the British Army in Ireland and the Irish Militia. Chapter Three examines the counterinsurgency actions of the army during the Fenian period, arguing that its performance was characterized by a significantly expanded infrastructural reach that had not been possible twenty years earlier when facing the Young Irelanders. The army’s ability to shift (albeit reluctantly) from large garrisons to a pattern of more diffuse distribution, and ultimately to the formation of highly flexible ‘Flying Columns’, denied sanctuary to the poorly organized and coordinated insurgents. The Irish Executive and senior commanders attempted to model and improve upon the army’s preparations in 1848, but they were able to exploit the advances in communication and transport technology in a far more coherent manner than could its opposition. What emerged were comprehensive instructions within the army’s “General Orders” that codified the manner in which the army should be employed “in aid of the civil power” in the suppression of insurrections. The chapter argues that much of the army’s success was the result of comprehensive systemic reform in both imperial and domestic spheres that had been spearheaded by General Rose. Not only were the army’s infantry, cavalry, and artillery components redistributed more efficiently and securely, but the manner in which it undertook its primary function in Ireland, that of acting “in aid of the civil power”, was considerably enhanced.

Chapter Four addresses the contested position of the Irish Militia and the controversy surrounding the Lord Lieutenant’s decision to first postpone and later cancel its embodiment for training during the period of heightened anxiety between 1866 and 1870. As with the calls for the formation of a Special Constabulary examined in Chapter Two, it places the activity, or rather the enforced inactivity, of the Irish Militia in the context of the British “amateur military tradition”. It examines aspects of the threat of Fenian infiltration into the Irish Militia that has been so comprehensively treated of in the army by A.J. Semple.⁸¹ The chapter argues that the postponement of training was designed to deny the Fenians the opportunity to hijack a force that the Executive feared was, or

⁸¹ A.J. Semple, ‘The Fenian Infiltration of the British Army’, *Journal of the Society of Army Historical Research* 53 (1974): 133–60.

might be, heavily infiltrated. It also examines the economic implications of the cancellation, but argues that even though the Irish Militia was not embodied, its infrastructure and the availability of its staff officers significantly contributed to the suppression of Fenianism across the country.

The final portion of the thesis, Part III, examines the virtually ignored naval counterinsurgency activities of the three branches of the Admiralty [Royal Navy, the Royal Marines, and the Coastguard], and argues that they played a central role in the deterrence and suppression of the attempted Fenian Rising. It suggests that a detailed investigation of Ireland's relationship with the Admiralty in the 1860s offers valuable insights into the Irish Executive's growing dependence on naval power for the provision of internal security. The lack of specifically relevant secondary material in this area has necessitated that this section of the thesis engages in a more substantial introductory examination. It begins, therefore, with a broader discussion of the difficulties faced by the Admiralty in its attempts to assist in the defence of Ireland, before progressing to a systematic examination of the contribution of the three branches to the Irish Executive's counterinsurgency activities in Ireland. This practice began with the Admiralty's reaction to the Repeal Crisis and Young Ireland rising in the 1840s, but intensified at the onset of the transatlantic Fenian conspiracy of the late 1860s.

Chapter Five examines the role of the Royal Navy (RN) in Irish waters to deter and suppress the Fenian threat. The chapter argues that the RN was required to perform all its regular duties of "imperial defence" while also becoming increasingly integrated with the Irish Constabulary and army, all of whom worked together "in aid of the civil power". It assesses the effectiveness of naval deterrence, measured by balancing the opinions of the Admiralty officials, the RN officers, the Irish administrators, and the local gentry, as well as the reports within unionist and nationalist newspapers. The activities considered include an investigation into the RN's coastal and riverine deployment throughout the mid-Victorian period and its detailed planning activities, as well as providing an assessment of the impact of numerous Fenian invasion scares and an examination of the social impact of the RN in Ireland's significant port cities and towns. These

roles are framed within naval parlance as the RN's blue-, green-, and brown-water functions.⁸²

Chapter Six considers the previously under-examined contribution of the Royal Marines to the suppression of Irish insurrections. It contextualizes these contributions by comparing them with their activity in the face of both the Repeal movement and the Young Irelanders. It argues that the Royal Marines undertook a much wider set of responsibilities in Ireland than has previously been acknowledged, engaging in roles as varied as the manning of coastal fortifications, acting in support of the constabulary and prison service, as well as contributing to riverine activities and the formation of flying columns. The key argument of the chapter is that the Royal Marines should be assessed not only in terms of what they actually did, but also in terms of what they facilitated. The presence of this truly imperial force helped to provide the freedom of manoeuvre to other branches of state power to undertake successful counterinsurgency actions.

The final contribution, Chapter Seven, examines the role of the Irish Coastguard, and its unusual liminal position in the defensive infrastructure of Ireland. The chapter argues that the Coastguard were responsible not only for coastal security, but were also required to interact with and support constabulary, military, and naval actions, with ever-increasing jurisdictional responsibilities. They occupied the most isolated positions, which risked making them as much of a target for Fenian attack as a means of suppressing the movement. In recognition of this unsatisfactory situation, the Admiralty undertook a series of reforms of the force and its physical infrastructure. The chapter concludes with an examination of the Coastguard's role in the tracking and apprehension of the crew of the *Erin's Hope*, the only sizeable transatlantic venture undertaken by the Fenians in this period.

⁸² 'Blue water' refers to oceanic activity, 'Green Water' to coastal operations, and 'Brown water' refers to riverine operations. For more see; Michael Lindberg and Daniel Todd, *Brown-, Green-, and Blue-Water Fleets: The Influence of Geography on Naval Warfare, 1861 to the Present* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002).

Part I - The Civil Sphere

Chapter 1 “Restoring Confidence”: The Suspension of *Habeas Corpus*

The British Lion, apprehensive that there may possibly be some fire where there is so much smoke, takes this new Irish bull by the horns, gently growls out a suspension of the privileges of *habeas corpus*, frisks his Royal tail over the Green Isle, stamps his imperial foot, and Fenianism in Ireland is a matter of history.¹

Although the *New York Times* in March 1866 disproportionately inflated the power of one single aspect of the British counterinsurgency in Ireland, its allegorical flair demonstrates the importance of the suspension of *Habeas Corpus* to any understanding of British counterinsurgency in Ireland. A more systematic investigation of the suspension demonstrates three interrelated concepts that underpin a broad range of counterinsurgency actions. Firstly, it highlights how important it was to form a political consensus in support of extra-constitutional action in what was a potentially volatile military situation. Secondly, it illustrates the military utility of coercive legislation. Thirdly, it highlights the disparity that emerged between the stated intentions of the Irish Executive’s rhetoric and the real-world implications of transnational counterinsurgency activities.

The gradual move toward suspension that culminated in the *Habeas Corpus Suspension Act (Ireland)* in February 1866 highlights the high levels of uncertainty and confusion faced by the Irish Executive as they struggled to come to terms with the nature of the opponent they faced. Once enacted, however, the subsequent extensions of the act underline how unwilling the Irish Executive was to relinquish aspects of its increased power, while at the same time demonstrating how the Executive lacked full control over the implementation of aspects of its own policies. The 1848 and 1866 *Habeas Corpus* suspensions were both implemented under the same Prime Minister, Lord Russell, and with the same goal in mind, namely the desire to deny Irish insurgents the time and space to fully organize and implement their plans. Such legislation was, and continued to be, a cornerstone of counterinsurgency responses throughout the Atlantic world.

¹ *New York Times*, 3 Mar., 1866

Although *Habeas Corpus* has multiple incarnations, the most common usage has been by the writ *ad subjiciendum*. This writ is applied to prevent a subject being held unjustly in custody by a higher governmental authority. The object of the ‘Great Writ of Liberty’ is “to inquire into the legality of imprisonment, whether it is by competent authority and for a sufficient reason; and according to the evidence given at the hearing, the prisoner is either discharged, bailed, tried, or remanded to custody.”² It is viewed as acting as a protection against tyranny and to secure the liberty of the individual in the face of state power, which might lock away its detractors and throw away the key. Its denial has often been viewed not only as a tacit acknowledgement of the failure of traditional liberal governance, but a valuable counterinsurgency tool. By escalating the level of coercive legislation gradually, Lord Lieutenant Wodehouse and his successors successfully walked a political, constitutional, and strategic tightrope, and this provided the context within which Fenianism could be successfully suppressed.

This fundamental safeguard speaks to many of the central issues of British rule in Ireland. In both its contemporary context and its subsequent historiographical treatment the *Habeas Corpus Suspension Act* (hereafter HCSA) provided competing justifications for actions on the part of both the Government and the Fenians during the period of rebellion in the late 1860s. Given the transatlantic nature of Fenianism, the 1866 suspension must be considered in its broader transnational context. The suspension occurred in parallel with and in turn facilitated broader military actions. The recourse to suspension of *Habeas Corpus* by any power involved the need “to preserve the balance between the liberty of the citizen and the safety of the government” while granting the power of arbitrary arrest on suspicion alone to ensure the survival of the state in the face of conspiracy, rebellion, and assassination.³

Modern political science presents competing interpretations and models for conceptualizing the use of ‘exceptional’ legislation. Italian political philosopher Giorgio Agamben, building upon the ideas of Carl Schmitt, posits that “the

² S.G.F., ‘The Suspension of Habeas Corpus During the War of the Rebellion’, *Political Science Quarterly* 3, no. 3 (September 1888): 454.

³ S.G.F., 455.

sovereign's role in constituting the normal legal system [comes] through its power to decide upon what is exceptional to its order", that sovereignty and legitimacy is proven by the power to proclaim the exception.⁴ Westminster's response to the Fenian threat fits neatly into this vista of "a juridical no-man's land where the law is suspended in order to be preserved."⁵ The language of all layers of government, whether in the form of parliamentary debates, official correspondence, or supportive press coverage, consistently evokes this justification. In his 2005 work, *States of Exception*, Agamben argues that it is important to recognize that the modern state of exception ("*État de Siège* – either *effectif* or *fictif*") is a creation of the democratic-revolutionary tradition and not the absolutist one.⁶ This places a discussion of HCSA firmly within the bounds of this framework, particularly in the widespread extension of British liberal ideas in the mid-Victorian period.⁷

Others see such exceptions to normal law "as a weakness deriving from lack of popular legitimacy."⁸ This perspective encapsulates much of the opinion of the contemporary nationalist reaction to suspension, whether in Ireland, America, Canada, or in the radical wing of British politics at Westminster. This rationale suffuses the historiography of the period and is perhaps best described by Charles Townshend who notes that "on the face of it the existence of disorder implies some breach in legitimacy. If the breach is small, the authority - and hence power - of the state remains ample. If it is large, authority must be eroded and power may become insufficient."⁹ By relatively early recourse to the HCSA, the Irish Executive deterred wider action, dealt with breaches while still small, and diffused later escalation. The HCSA in Ireland was implemented in anticipation of, rather than in reaction to, an outbreak, a mode that speaks to the differing interpretations of HCSA usage within the historiography.

⁴ Paul A. Passavant, 'The Contradictory State of Giorgio Agamben', *Political Theory* 35, no. 2 (April 2007): 148.

⁵ Elena Bellina and Paola Bonifazio, *State of Exception: Cultural Responses to the Rhetoric of Fear* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2006), viii.

⁶ Agamben, *State of Exception*, 4.

⁷ Patrick Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom: Liberalism and the Modern City* (New York: Verso Books, 2003).

⁸ Gerry Kearns, *The Geography of Fenianism: Full Research Report*, (Swindon: ESRC, End of Award Report, RES-000-22-0499), 2.

⁹ Townshend, *Political Violence in Ireland*, 409.

Here we will examine the suspension in detail; the context and pressure surrounding its introduction; its passage through Westminster; its effectiveness; and the transnational consequences for Ireland and the broader 'Atlantic World'. Unlike other discussions of *Habeas Corpus* suspensions in Ireland, we will also consider the impact of the numerous extensions of the act and evaluate their implications as a counterinsurgency technique. We conclude with an analysis of the disparity between rhetoric and action, interrogating the act's stated aim of targeting the Irish-American "plotters", and assessing whether in fact it resulted in disproportionate punishment of the leaders' willing "dupes" in Ireland.¹⁰ The continual recourse to *Habeas Corpus* suspension was most clearly demonstrated with the 1848 suspension that, as will be demonstrated, became a touchstone for politicians negotiating uncertain terrain in the 1860s.

Historical Context

Though *Habeas Corpus* had long been held as the "most stringent curb that ever legislation imposed on tyranny", it was implemented inconsistently throughout the British Empire, not least in Ireland.¹¹ While it first appeared on the statute books in England in 1692, Poynings's Law was used to delay its introduction in Ireland until 1782.¹² Though it was conceded by eighteenth-century executives that some provisions existed under Common Law, they were "not under the authority of statute." This disparity was justified by both the British Attorney and Solicitor General in 1768, who argued that "however wise and just such provisions have been found by experience in this country, they are not yet safe and expedient in Ireland where the Roman Catholic religion is still prevalent, tumultuous disorders and insurrections so frequent, and dangerous riots still continue."¹³ The 1782 act nominally replicated the British act and afforded the outward appearance of consistency in civil liberties on the two islands. The Irish act, however, contained a

¹⁰ For more on the rhetoric of 'Plotters' vs 'Dupes', see Michael de Nie, "'A Medley Mob of Irish-American Plotters and Irish Dupes': The British Press and Transatlantic Fenianism", *Journal of British Studies* 40, no. 2 (April 2001): 213–40.

¹¹ Jenkins, *The Fenian Problem*, 5.

¹² Kevin Costello, *The Law of Habeas Corpus in Ireland: History, Scope of Review, and Practice under Article 40.4.2 of the Irish Constitution* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006), 6.

¹³ Costello, 14.

specific exemption for “treasonable practices”.¹⁴ This meant that suspension could be initiated before a full-blown rebellion was underway, a precondition that allowed *Habeas Corpus* suspension to be used as both a common apparatus of governance and a counterinsurgency tool.

Coercive legislation, up to and including *Habeas Corpus* suspension, therefore, became part of the armoury of British governance in nineteenth-century Ireland. Virginia Crossman notes that Ireland “was ruled under the ordinary law for only five years of the first half of the nineteenth century,” and that “approaching the subject from a slightly different angle, Samuel Clark tells us that governments passed or renewed thirty-five coercion acts between the Union and the Famine.”¹⁵ In the century as a whole, specific suspension acts appeared eleven times, while other types of coercive legislation incorporated many elements synonymous with suspension.¹⁶ The future Chief Secretary Lord Naas’s maiden speech in the House of Commons was in support of the continuation of the 1848 suspension, which indicates the degree to which recourse to *Habeas Corpus* suspension was a regular experience for members of the Irish Executive and their parliamentary counterparts in how they dealt with the threat of insurrection throughout the century.¹⁷

Lord Russell, who introduced the 1848 bill, explained that its purpose was “to prevent insurrection, to preserve internal peace, to preserve the unity of this empire, and to secure the throne of these realms and the free institutions of this country.”¹⁸ In strategic terms, however, it has been interpreted as being designed to allow the Government forces to meet the Young Irelanders on the government’s own terms. The outcome of that rising may have been dramatically different, argued Lord Clarendon, were it not due to the fact that the insurgents had not

¹⁴ Costello, 20.

¹⁵ Virginia Crossman, ‘Emergency Legislation and Agrarian Disorder in Ireland, 1821-41’, *Irish Historical Studies* 27, no. 108 (November 1991): 309.

¹⁶ Costello, *The Law of Habeas Corpus in Ireland: History, Scope of Review, and Practice under Article 40.4.2 of the Irish Constitution*, 259–63.

¹⁷ HC Deb., 6 February 1849. Vol. 102, cc 352.

¹⁸ HC Deb. 22 July 1848. Vol. 100, cc 713.

“been permitted to select their own time, instead being forced to take ours.”¹⁹ Speaking with almost twenty years of hindsight, future Prime Minister Lord Derby noted that while the 1848 act had “brought the treasonable movement to a crisis, and showed its essential weakness,” there was good reason to believe in 1866 that the new suspension would “produce a similar effect now with as little danger to the country.” The passage of the 1848 and 1866 acts were designed to bring matters to a head as quickly as possible, with Derby again arguing that “When the Fenian Emissaries find that they are exposed to summary arrest and imprisonment, they must make their choice between abandoning their scheme or boldly taking up the challenge of a powerful Government.”²⁰ Here, both the 1848 and 1866 suspensions might be viewed in terms of what in modern counterinsurgency parlance is known as “sanctuary denial”, a key element in modern counterinsurgency.²¹

Pressure for the Bill in Ireland

For the planned suspension to become a reality required Wodehouse to assemble a coalition of support both in Ireland and at Westminster, a process that required considerable political dexterity. Charles Townshend has argued persuasively that in Britain both the 1866 HCSA and 1973/74 Prevention of Terrorism Acts in Northern Ireland, “any fear of executive despotism has always been overcome by a sense of outrage at resistance to the rule of law and order.”²² In other words, public opinion was supportive, with those most inclined to call for the 1866 suspension being the resident landed gentry, the group with most to lose. By contrast, much of the opposition came from within the British parliamentary establishment for whom the corruption of liberal government grounded in “an image of consensus” may have been too high a price to pay for the maintenance of

¹⁹ Christine Kinealy, *Repeal and Revolution: 1848 in Ireland* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 280; Denis Gwynn, *Young Ireland and 1848* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1949), 239; Charles Gavan Duffy, *Four Years of Irish History: 1845-49* (London: Cassell, Petter, Galpin & Co., 1883), 641.

²⁰ *Times*, 17 Feb., 1866.

²¹ FM 3-24, Counterinsurgency (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, December 2006), 1-16. See also, Robert Cassidy, “Indigenous Forces and Sanctuary Denial: Enduring Counterinsurgency Imperatives” *Small Wars Journal*, (Forthcoming).

²² Townshend, *Political Violence in Ireland*, viii.

law and order.²³ Building a political consensus strong enough to pass HCSA through the Commons with just six dissenting votes, represented the successful implementation of the political component of the counterinsurgency policy.

Implementing the HCSA, however, seems to have been neither rash nor overzealous by contemporary standards. A gradual escalation of response from the Irish Executive, driven by external, as well as internal pressures, resulted in three phases of action. The first phase was classified as a beefing up of standard security activity, primarily prosecutions under a Special Commission to deal with the *Irish People* arrests. The second phase was the proclamation of disturbed districts using the existing 1856 Peace Preservation Act.²⁴ The successful completion of these interim stages cleared the way for the final phase, the suspension itself. Equally, the response of the loyal Irish and their growing clamour for harsher measures to deal with the Fenian threat had three elements. It began with growing pressure from individual landlords directly to the Lord Lieutenant. It escalated when small groups of gentry lobbied together for action, but did not reach its peak until the Rotunda Resolutions of February 1866 were passed with unanimity by a large group, representative of the landed, commercial, and political classes. Influencing and influenced by all these groups was the response of the various newspapers, both in Ireland and further afield.

Coordinating a coherent response to Fenianism was made more difficult by the conflicting advice received by the Lord Lieutenant. Wodehouse was quick to complain to the Home Secretary that "Hitherto we have been well abused on both sides, for doing too little and doing too much, from which I infer that we cannot have gone very far wrong."²⁵ A slew of correspondence between Wodehouse, General Sir Hugh Rose, and Earl de Grey eventually settled on the impending, but

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ The 1856 Peace Preservation (Ireland) act has been described as a "relatively restrained" piece of legislation. It focussed mainly on providing the power to 'Proclaim' districts or counties and control arms ownership. See, Clive Walker, *The Prevention of Terrorism in British Law* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 12-13.

²⁵ Wodehouse to George Grey, 14 Jan., 1865. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng 4039, 151-6.

not immediate necessity to suspend *Habeas Corpus*.²⁶ Just four days later, however, Wodehouse wrote to de Grey outlining his thinking saying:

Now we see no remedy for this but the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act. That remedy could exactly fit the disease, we should be able to arrest the paid agents of revolution and to prevent the assemblages in the Capital of men sent over specially to take part in a rising. The remedy may appear sharp, but the disease is very serious, and I am convinced will yield to nothing but sharp treatment.²⁷

This rapid shift in Wodehouse's opinion highlights the problem of accurately assessing the validity and strengths of the calls for HCSA in the rapidly changing political and military climate of early 1866.

Wodehouse seems to have remained uncertain as to the need for a suspension for three weeks, which demonstrated just how difficult an accurate assessment of the Fenian threat was for the Irish Executive. On 4 February, Wodehouse wrote to Earl de Grey to inform him that "I have discussed the question of the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* act today with the law offices and we are agreed that there is not that urgent necessity for such a step at the present moment as would justify an immediate application to parliament."²⁸ However, only five days later, and within a week of the formal request, he quoted the opinion of General Rose to de Grey saying,

Sir Hugh thinks that no amount of troops will quiet the alarm and that the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act in order to arrest the agents would be a far more effective and simple measure than detaching troops. This is true enough but the one is a constitutional, the other an unconstitutional measure, and we should be open to just blame if we did not furnish all reasonable military protection to loyal people.²⁹

Here we notice the conflict between the pragmatist and the idealist in Wodehouse, who acknowledged both the right of the loyal population to protection and the potential accusation of over-zealous actions and breaches of the constitutional imperatives under which he operated. This presents a considerable maturation of his thinking when compared with his assertion to Lord Russell the previous September when he noted that he was "quite prepared to run some risk of

²⁶ Rose to Wodehouse, 15 Jan., 1866. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4039, 171-4. Wodehouse to de Grey, 17 Jan., 1866. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4040, 7-9.

²⁷ Wodehouse to de Grey, 21 Jan., 1866. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C, 4040, 63-70.

²⁸ Wodehouse to de Grey, 4 Feb., 1866. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4041, 36-7.

²⁹ Wodehouse to de Grey, 9 Feb., 1866. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4041, 96-100.

exceeding the law, if necessary."³⁰ John Powell, editor of Wodehouse's journals, considered the kind of difficulty this present to the Lord Lieutenant, who he viewed as being "Liberal By Principle", indicating the degree to which these actions were in fundamental opposition of Wodehouse's own sensibilities.³¹

As an interim step, Wodehouse proclaimed Dublin City and County, the county of Tipperary, and the county and city of Waterford on 16 January 1866.³² The *Express* noted that this was "a step in the right direction", implicitly hinting at a suspension act before long. In mitigation of the potential accusation of heavy handedness, the *Daily Express* further noted that provisions of the proclamation prohibited the ownership of firearms and other weaponry and the right, under warrant from the Lord Lieutenant, "to direct a search to be made in any district named."³³ These weapons searches were, it considered, a small price to pay for the additional security guaranteed. "Where nothing is discovered", argued the correspondent, "no harm is done, and the trifling inconvenience of a search will be gladly submitted to for the public benefit by all except those whose convenience need not be consulted." While falling short of suggesting an actual suspension of *Habeas Corpus*, the author recognized the deterrent value of proclaiming entire counties as a stepping stone which facilitated "the proclamation and garrisoning of the country [being] *imperatively demanded*."³⁴ Even the *Freeman's Journal* commented that while "the proclamation of the metropolitan city and county is a grave step which no Government could justifiably resort to, save under the most urgent necessity", those conditions now existed. Furthermore, they observed, "Men begin to feel that the Government is on the alert, and that, being now alive to the danger of the present crisis, it will not by apathy or inaction suffer life and property" to be threatened by the Fenians.³⁵

³⁰ Wodehouse to Russell, 1 Sept., 1865, TNA, Russell Papers, PRO 30/22/28, ff. 269-270. Quoted Powell, John Douglas. *The Life of John Wodehouse, First Earl of Kimberley, A Dissertation in History*. (PhD, Texas Tech University, May 1986), 97.

³¹ John Powell, *Liberal by Principle* (London: Historians Press, 1996).

³² For a detailed account of the progression of nationwide Proclamations under the Peace Preservation Act 1856, see 'Minute Book of the Irish Privy Council' PCO/MB 14. National Archives of Ireland (NAI). Leadam, *Coercive Measures in Ireland, 1830-1880*, (National Press Agency), 30.

³³ *Daily Express*, 15 Jan., 1866.

³⁴ *Ibid.* Original emphasis.

³⁵ *Freeman's Journal*, 16 Jan., 1866.

While proclamations assuaged some of the fears, the progress towards suspension accelerated in the period between Christmas and early February 1866. The unionist *Dublin Evening Mail* noted that while they had heartily approved of proclamations, “we are bound to add that the advantage expected from that proceeding had not flowed from it,” thus further limiting the range of actions available to the Executive. Lord Bessborough concurred and recommended that the entire country be proclaimed.³⁶ Within a week, he reinforced this hard line by rolling in behind a suspension, supported on the same day by Lords Dunraven and Powerscourt, who both favoured proclamation and suspension.³⁷ The growing consensus was further reinforced in the week leading up to the formal request when both Lord Lurgan and Lord Courtown joined the chorus of gentry calling for suspension.³⁸ This growing stream of correspondence undoubtedly influenced the Executive’s ultimate decision to request formal suspension, wherein the political exigencies of the situations trumped whatever liberal concerns remained in Wodehouse’s mind.

The second phase in the growing panic amongst the gentry resulted in a meeting in Reynolds’ Hotel, Sackville Street, on 25 January 1866, attended by “a considerable number of landed gentry and others,” chaired by the Earl of Erne, whose goal was the “allaying apprehension in the public mind.”³⁹ They sought information from the Executive that could “calm... the fears of the most timid, and encourage merchants and agriculturists to pursue their usual avocations undisturbed by apprehension or uneasiness.”⁴⁰ In this instance, the pressure was temporarily trepanned by proclaiming the entire counties of Sligo and Carlow, the barony of Ardagh in the county of Longford, and the parishes of Drum, St. Peter’s and Kiltoom, in the barony of Athlone.⁴¹ Support emerged from both sides of the popular press, which allowed the Executive time to assess the rapidly developing

³⁶ Lord Bessborough to Wodehouse. 21 Jan., 1866. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4040, 75-76.

³⁷ Lord Bessborough to Wodehouse. 26 Jan., 1866. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4040, 128-9. Lord Dunraven to Wodehouse, 26 Jan., 1866. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4040, 130-1. Lord Powerscourt to Wodehouse, 2 Feb., 1866. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4041, 13-18.

³⁸ Lord Courtown to Wodehouse, 10 Feb., 1866. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4041, 106-7. Lord Lurgan to Wodehouse, Undated (probably 2 Feb., 1866). Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4041, 67-68.

³⁹ *Irish Times*, 27 Jan., 1866.

⁴⁰ *Irish Times*, 27 Jan., 1866.

⁴¹ Proclamation in *Dublin Gazette*, 26 Jan., 1866.

situation. The *Nation* called for widespread proclamations at the same time as the ultra-loyalist newspaper *The Warder* asserted that, “the Government have taken a bold, simple, and wise step, in which the loyalty and intelligence – we might say the prudence and selfishness – of all sane and well-disposed persons will cordially support them.”⁴² This gives a sense of the peak level of support experienced by the Executive, and solidified the growing political consensus that had emerged.

Wodehouse’s first public reference to the possibility of a suspension came on 30 January 1866 when he addressed the “Splendid inaugural banquet given by the Lord Mayor.”⁴³ In front of peers, members of parliament, and the legal profession Wodehouse stated emphatically that

The Government has but one plain and simple duty before it – to enforce the laws and maintain the peace of the country. The government will shrink from no measures necessary to effect these objects. It has ample means at its disposal, and will use those means without passion, knowing that in doing so it has the support of all the respectable classes in Ireland.⁴⁴

Although recognizing that an application to Westminster for an act to suppress *Habeas Corpus* was “a measure, extreme indeed,” he saw it not only as a mechanism to limit physical threats, but also as a way to soothe the anxiety of his primary constituents, the gentry. He argued that the suspension “will not be regarded as an aggression upon public liberty, but as the means of restoring confidence to all classes.” It would, he assured the gathering, be employed predominantly against the “swaggering filibusters”, the returning veterans of the US Civil War.⁴⁵ Wodehouse’s difficult political position was exemplified by the *Daily Express*, which noted that, “English criticism is as fickle as it is ignorant, and the very journals that talk of alarmist and panic-vendors today will be the first to blame their lenity, if the evils become palpable, tomorrow.”⁴⁶ This inherent paradox illustrates the seemingly impossible position faced by the Executive, and why such a broad base of support was required.

⁴² *The Nation*, 27 Jan., 1866. *Warder*, 20 Jan., 1866.

⁴³ *Irish Times*, 31 Jan., 1866.

⁴⁴ *Telegraph*, 1 Feb., 1866.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Daily Express*, 2 Feb., 1866.

The Rotunda Resolutions

The centralization of power in the hands of the Executive that would result from suspension was as politically problematic as it was militarily useful. As Townshend has argued, “it was precisely the repeated intervention of a government armed with special powers which had weakened the authority of the local magistrates.”⁴⁷ In this case, the Executive’s most comprehensive and overt support for extraordinary measures came at a meeting in the Rotunda, Dublin, chaired by the Marquis of Downshire on 1 February 1866. Three resolutions were passed that display the range of measures they deemed appropriate for the Executive. An examination of these bipartisan resolutions provides an excellent snapshot of the competing counterinsurgency measures under consideration. That the resulting suggestions were already in train might be viewed as offering to the Irish Executive a degree of political cover for their actions.

The resolutions were designed and proposed so as to depict a comprehensive support base for the HCSA and further military action. The first resolution, proposed by the Earl of Charlemont, read:

Resolved – That the growth, nature, and development of the Fenian Confederacy have produced among the loyal and peaceable inhabitants of the country a feeling of well-founded alarm; and in the opinion of this meeting, it is the imperative duty of the Government to use the most prompt and effective means to crush a conspiracy so destructive to the peace and prosperity of Ireland, and also to afford full protection to the loyal and well-disposed of all classes in this country.⁴⁸

Colonel Knox Gore (Lieutenant Colonel of the North Mayo Militia and Lord Lieutenant of Sligo), who seconded the motion, espoused the view that “if extraordinary times should call for extraordinary measures I am satisfied that we shall be ready to tell them that we will support them in whatever is required.” The second resolution was proposed by the Earl of Erne, saying:

Resolved: That the government be requested as far as possible to increase the military force in this country, so that no place, where suitable accommodation can be found for troops shall be without them, to awe the evil-disposed, and encourage the well-affected and loyal of all classes and creeds.

⁴⁷ Townshend, *Political Violence in Ireland*, 54.

⁴⁸ *Irish Times*, 2 Feb., 1866.

He added forcefully that it was “our duty to come forward here to tell the Government to take measures to quell this movement.” Mr J. L. Naper of Loughcrew, a resident landlord for more than fifty years, seconded this resolution. He added that “I need say no more, except to express as strongly as I can that the sending over of the military here is not to shed blood, but to be able to prevent its effusion; and we call for them for the purpose of showing that we are most anxious to support the law and order and to avert danger.”⁴⁹

The third resolution further broadened the support. It was proposed by Sir Percy Nugent, a Catholic landlord from Westmeath, and illustrated the sense of *noblesse oblige* amongst the landed gentry.

Resolved: That it is the duty of all classes of the well affected inhabitants of Ireland to co-operate in maintaining inviolate the British connection, the authority of our gracious Queen; and to support the Executive in the defence of property, law, order and religion.

Here the religion clause is not, as might be supposed, primarily an established Church of Ireland view, but rather, argued Nugent, it should be remembered that “Fenians have waged war against all religions, and therefore it was that the word religion was not amiss.” The wording was deeply cognizant of and tried to capitalize upon the overt anti-clericalism of Fenianism. A counter-interpretation of this clause might, however, amount to the supposition that this was intended to create a veneer of ecumenism, to offset potential accusations of sectarianism. The resolution was seconded by Mr Alexander Parker JP – a member of the “commercial classes” representing a further broadening of the base of support. All resolutions were carried unanimously.⁵⁰

The final act of the meeting was to resolve further that a deputation of the group’s leaders should present the resolutions in person to the Lord Lieutenant.⁵¹ In response to the delegation of heavyweights, Wodehouse replied that it “affords great satisfaction to the government to receive this support from so large and influential a body of Gentlemen from all parts of the country, and comprising all

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ The delegation included: The Earl of Charlemont, Lord James Butler, Earl of Longford, Lord Claremont, Earl of Erne, Lord Clarina, Colonel Knox Gore, Hon. Cavendish Butler, and Alexander Parker Esq., J.P.

parties.” Clearly the issue of consensus within the gentry and the potential of greater political cover remained critical for Wodehouse.⁵²

The media reporting of the meeting highlights the growing support for extraordinary measures. The *Irish Times* now argued that the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus Act* could

produce no inconvenience to any well disposed and loyal citizens, but would effectually scare off those scourgings of Federal armies, who swagger in our streets, wearing fragments of American uniform. We believe that if this undesirable class of visitor were dispersed or imprisoned, the whole bubble would burst.⁵³

It also commented on the paradoxical situation in which the Government found themselves, namely that “the means adopted to repress a powerless body of malcontents sometimes gives importance to a contemptible sedition, and fear cannot always be allayed without exciting fear by the measures which must be adopted for the protection of the loyal.”⁵⁴ Similarly, the *Freeman’s Journal* noted that “Alarm may be carried too far, and the public mind agitated by the very measures intended to tranquillize it.”⁵⁵ In other words, by acting decisively, the Executive might unintentionally evoke an even stronger counter-reaction from the Fenians and those sympathetic to them.

The *Daily Express* was effusive in its praise and enthusiasm for the Rotunda Resolutions. In assessing the meeting’s significance it noted, “Not for many years has a meeting been held in Ireland more important than that in the Rotundo yesterday.” This was proven, in their view, by the rank of the speakers in attendance, the significance and subject of the resolutions, and the general tone of the meeting. More importantly in terms of providing a broad national picture, it “furnished its representatives from every province, and almost every county, in numbers that, however large, would have been far greater if haste had not unavoidably marked the summons.” Their motivation came not of a desire to be a thorn in the side of the government, but rather to “uphold the Government of the

⁵² *Irish Times*, 3 Feb., 1866.

⁵³ *Irish Times*, 2 Feb., 1866.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Freeman’s Journal*, 2 Feb., 1866.

country.”⁵⁶ Many months later, speaking in the House of Lords of the original passage of the HCSA, Kimberley acknowledged the “debt of gratitude which the Government owe to the gentry and nobility of Ireland for the support, which they gave upon this trying occasion.”⁵⁷ The HCSA had a clear unifying impact on the loyalist community, regardless of political party. We might also note that the broad coverage of the events in and around the Rotunda Resolutions played a significant part in the shaping of both public and private opinion as to the nature of the Fenian threat and the appropriateness of the Government’s response. The episode and its impact neatly sustain the notion that it was the magistrate class who “were usually the first to cry out for special legislation, [and] the government’s response [that] reinforced their alarmism.”⁵⁸ To understand the potentially fractious nature of the suspension, a closer examination of activities in Westminster is revealing.

Parliamentary Debate and Reactions

To dispel the growing alarmism, the Home Secretary framed the Commons debate so as to emphasise the deterrent aspects of the proposed suspension. He informed the house that he had waited “till they became convinced that every power of the ordinary law and every constitutional form had been exhausted, and till the conviction was forced on their minds that additional and extraordinary powers were necessary for the accomplishment of the great object which we must all have in view. (Cheers)”⁵⁹ All reasonable incremental steps had been taken, and the additional powers were not sought “with a view to punishment, but with a view to prevention.”⁶⁰ This shift of attention confirms that the act was originally designed as a mode of deterrence, rather than to be punitive or coercive in nature.

Disraeli threw his support behind the bill from the opposition benches. His support was based on his view that the threat’s main cause was driven by American and Irish-American veterans, that the issue did not come forth as a result of misgovernment in Ireland, and that the steps now being considered had a clear

⁵⁶ *Daily Express*, 2 Feb., 1866.

⁵⁷ House of Lords Debate (hereafter HL Deb.), 6 Aug., 1866. Vol. 184, cc 2083.

⁵⁸ Townshend, 54.

⁵⁹ HC Deb., 17 Feb., 1866. Vol. 181, cc 667-677.

⁶⁰ HC Deb., 17 Feb., 1866. Vol. 181, cc 683.

precedent established during Young Ireland rising. By framing his response in this manner he returned to his position in the debate of 22 July 1848 when he had denied that the cause of the rising was to be found “in the social or political grievances of which we have heard so much in the sister country”, which again externalized the proximal cause of Irish agitation.⁶¹ Thus the desired bipartisan endorsement was achieved. Disraeli now called for passage of the bill in almost oxymoronic terms by announcing it was “in the interest of the liberties and freedom of the people of Ireland themselves that I call upon the House to assist the Government in passing the Bill without the slightest delay.”⁶²

The most cogent opposition to the bill was articulated by John Bright, the well-known radical MP from Manchester. So onerous did he feel that day had been that of his twenty-two years sitting in the commons, he had “never spoken with so strong a feeling of shame and humiliation as that which possesses me at the moment.” Six million of his fellow subjects were to be deprived of a right “which is at once the commonest and the most sacred possessed by a British subject.” The bill was being passed, in Bright’s opinion, with “obscene and unusual rapidity”. While he did not question the necessity of the bill’s passage at this time, nor the degree to which the Lord Lieutenant was “in his heart of hearts as anxious to do justice to Ireland as any man can be”, he dismissed the notion that the core of the difficulties arose from America, and that the influence of the American Fenians merely added to the “gravity and difficulty of this question”. There was not fire in Ireland he added “without fuel”, the fuel of misgovernment.⁶³

The core of Bright’s objection was that any outcome achieved would be merely a temporary salve. “You may pass this Bill”, he argued,

you may put the Home Secretary’s 500 men in gaol, you may suppress conspiracy and put down insurrection, but the moment they are suppressed there will still remain the germs of the malady, and from these germs will grow up, as heretofore, another crop of disaffection, another harvest of misfortunes.⁶⁴

⁶¹ HC Deb., 22 July 1848. Vol. 100 cc 729.

⁶² HC Deb., 17 Feb., 1866. Vol. 181, cc 683-685.

⁶³ HC Deb., 17 Feb., 1866. Vol. 181, cc 686-695.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

He pleaded that the current situation would prove a catalyst for reform and that a further session of parliament would not elapse before the underlying causes of the discontent should be addressed. Nevertheless, he acknowledged that the impending disaster necessitated that he acquiesce and vote in favour of the bill. This speech was described by Bright's own radical newspaper, the *Morning Star*, as "unsurpassable for pathos and for comprehensive and incisive thought... Never has so sound a note been so powerfully and judiciously struck". Liberals were keen, however, to row in behind their front bench. John Roebuck, who had come to the Commons bar in 1838 to protest at the suspension of the Canadian constitution, and a former Irish Chief Secretary (and later Adullamite) Edward Horsman, however, were quick to lambaste Bright for his "mischief" and his "complaining from beginning to end of the miseries of Ireland."⁶⁵

Some of the most stringent Irish opposition to the bill came from The O'Donoghue,⁶⁶ who argued that "coercion was not what Ireland required" and stated emphatically that he felt it would create panic and intensify disaffection. The ordinary constitutional powers at the disposal of the Government, "if placed in the hands of men of nerve and judgment, would be amply sufficient to meet any emergency that would arise." The major benefactor of this measure, he supposed, would be James Stephens, as its passage would do little more than bring extra attention on to him and his organization. No new argument had been presented to Parliament that "would not have justified the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act six months ago, and which would not justify its perpetual suspension." He went on to point out that, structurally, suspension had always preceded the instigation of a Special Commission, not followed it.⁶⁷ For those six who actually voted against the Bill, John Francis Maguire⁶⁸ would later explain, "all we did, or intended to do, by the vote which we gave on that occasion, was to enter our protest against that system of dealing with Ireland, and the impolicy [sic] of withholding those

⁶⁵ *Morning Star*, Republished in the *Freeman's Journal* 20 Feb., 1866.

⁶⁶ MP for Tipperary 1857-65, MP for Tralee 1865-85.

⁶⁷ HC Deb., 17 Feb., 1866. Vol. 181, cc 702.

⁶⁸ MP for Dungarvan 1852-65, MP for Cork City 1865-72. Proprietor of the Cork-based *Examiner* and author of *The Irish in America*. (1867).

measures, which in our consciences we believed necessary for the safety of the country.”⁶⁹

In proposing that the matter be brought to division, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gladstone, noted the degree to which support for the bill from Irish MPs was virtually unanimous, while those opposed to the bill, such as Bright and Mill, were British. Not only did they have the unanimous consent of the House, but he also noted the condemnation of Fenianism in Ireland by everyone “who can claim to represent either authority, property, or religion,” in a manner that surely would have pleased the proponents of the Rotunda Resolution. Furthermore, he thanked the House, saying that its members “have given us credit for not having lightly, wantonly, or needlessly made a proposal and submitted a measure of a character so grave and, at first sight, so objectionable in the eyes of all those who understand the spirit and who love the action of our Constitution.”⁷⁰ Ultimately, the Bill passed 364 to 6, a majority of 358, and passed through the Lords without amendment.

The disparity of civil liberties between Britain and Ireland is most obvious when we consider Queen Victoria’s support for a limited suspension of *Habeas Corpus* in Britain. The call had emerged after reports from Lord Monck in Canada that “a party of thirty men allegedly intent on assassinating the queen and members of the Cabinet” had set sail from New York.⁷¹ While Disraeli showed some sympathy and support for the idea, his Cabinet colleagues were keen to dismiss it saying that, “Members of Parliament would never consent to so serious an infraction of the liberty of the whole people for the sake of punishing a few desperate conspirators,” when this was precisely the *modus operandi* when it came to the governance of Ireland.⁷²

The Irish act passed with exceptional speed. The main point of comparison here is the 1848 suspension, which was also under the premiership of Lord

⁶⁹ HC Deb., 2 Aug., 1866. Vol. 184, cc 1923-4.

⁷⁰ HC Deb., 17 Feb., 1866. Vol. 181, cc 717-24.

⁷¹ Jenkins, *The Fenian Problem*, 167.

⁷² Jenkins, 168.

Russell.⁷³ Then, just four days were required from passage through the Commons on Saturday, 22nd July 1848, to the following Monday in the Lords, and an introduction “as soon after as Royal assent could be granted.”⁷⁴ This time, all phases were completed within a single day; the commons met at noon, the bill passed the Lords by 4pm and Royal assent the following Monday. In order to maintain the element of surprise, the Irish authorities began making arrests “hours before they could have received confirmation of a formal enactment.”⁷⁵

Amongst the highest-profile responses to the act was that offered by John Stuart Mill. As recently as 1861, Mill had concluded, somewhat erroneously, that “No Irishman is now less free than an Anglo-Saxon, [or] than if he were from any other portion of the British dominions.”⁷⁶ However, speaking in the Commons five years later, he compared the necessity of coercive legislation to the overly brutal school master saying; “But when any man in authority—whether he was the captain of a ship or the commander of a regiment, or the master of a school, needed the instrument of flogging to maintain his authority—that man deserved flogging as much as any of those who were flogged by his orders.”⁷⁷ Thus the necessity of being reduced to measures so offensive to the Liberal sensibilities was proof of the delegitimizing impact of the laws, as had previously been demonstrated through Mill’s work on the Jamaica Committee in their attempted prosecution of Governor Eyre.⁷⁸

In his *Autobiography*, Mill later reflected on his speech that “I did no more than the general opinion of England now admits to have been just; but the anger against Fenianism was then in all its freshness; any attack on what Fenians attacked was looked upon as an apology for them; and I was so unfavourably

⁷³ Upon the death of Lord Palmerston in October 1865 Lord Russell had seen out the remainder of the Liberal parliament as Prime Minister until its fall in June 1866.

⁷⁴ *The Times*, 17 Feb., 1866.

⁷⁵ Comerford, *The Fenians in Context*, 133.

⁷⁶ J.S. Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government*, (Everyman’s Library, 1954), 365. Quoted in E.D. Steele, “J.S. Mill and the Irish Questions: Reform, and the Integrity of the Empire, 1865-79”, *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 13, No. 3. (Sept., 1970), 420.

⁷⁷ John Robson and Bruce Kinzer (eds.), *Public and Parliamentary Speeches by John Stuart Mill November 1850-November 1868*, (Toronto, University of Toronto Press and Routledge), 52-3.

⁷⁸ Richard Reeves, *John Stuart Mill: Victorian Firebrand* (London: Atlantic Books, 2008), 382.

received by the House.”⁷⁹ It proved a steep learning curve to the newly elected MP when his friends encouraged his forbearance on the floor of the Commons. Like many others, Mill was prepared to “trade a few liberties in the defence of a great cause”, and his eventual Aye vote might well be viewed in this light.⁸⁰ As he would explain in 1868 in the closing paragraph of his pamphlet *England and Ireland*, if Britain was to “attempt to hold Ireland by force, it will be at the expense of all the character we possess as lovers and maintainers of free government, or respecters of any rights except our own.”⁸¹ It did, however, fulfil his own criteria for the ‘Harm Principle’ set out in his treatise, *On Liberty*, published just seven years previously, wherein he argued that “the sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number, is self-protection.”⁸²

Overcoming the practical problems inherent in the suspension undoubtedly proved a catalyst for Wodehouse, both in terms of his personal views on Ireland and his career trajectory. The strain of the period on Wodehouse is reflected in his personal journal. The week of the suspension was described as “One of the hardest week’s work I ever did.”⁸³ It also elicited concern for his subordinates, primarily the Under Secretary, for whom he expressed the concern that, “I think Larcom will break down altogether.”⁸⁴ This highlights the strain that the HCSA placed on the bureaucratic infrastructure of Dublin Castle. British content was obvious and his political career continued its upward trajectory. This esteem, however, was far from universal.

As far as Dublin Corporation was concerned, the suspension of *Habeas Corpus* was the one significant blot on Wodehouse’s copybook. While preparing their traditional address of thanks to the outgoing Lord Lieutenant, they commented positively on not only his handling of the ‘rinderpest’ cattle plague, but also on his temperament and the manner in which he comported himself, saying

⁷⁹ John Stuart Mill, *The Autobiography of John Stuart Mill* (Halifax: Ryburn, 1992), 212.

⁸⁰ Reeves, *John Stuart Mill*, 394.

⁸¹ Mill, *England and Ireland*, 44.

⁸² Mill, *On Liberty and Other Essays*, 14.

⁸³ Wodehouse, *The Journal of John Wodehouse First Earl of Kimberley, for 1862-1902*, 183.

⁸⁴ Wodehouse, 184.

that “A more courteous gentleman representing her Majesty in this country could not be found.”⁸⁵ In proposing an amendment to the address, the advanced nationalist A.M. Sullivan, while acknowledging Kimberley’s personal qualities, asserted that he had done most serious damage to the country. “His office”, Sullivan opined, “had been marked not by garlands of flowers, but by chains and manacles.” When he arrived Ireland was free and enjoyed all the constitutional rights associated with true liberty, but left them “a nation prostrated, and bound.”⁸⁶ Sullivan’s amendment to the address failed to pass by 8 votes to 12. The only other gripe of the Corporation was the removal of their status as that of a Board of Superintendence, a direct result of their own failings in oversight of the prison system in the period dominated by James Stephens’s escape from Richmond Bridewell.

The general sentiment might best have been summed up in a song of the time, printed in *The Nation* the following month. One verse in particular sheds light on the Suspension issue:

*Habeas Corpus Act suspended,
By Police and spies attended,
Every joy and pleasure ended,
Drearly, Oh! Oh! Drearly, Oh!
But now this may be quite amended
Kimberley, Oh! Oh! Kimberley, Oh!*⁸⁷

The arrival of Lord Abercorn – ‘Peppercorn’ in the terms of the song – may have offered the prospect of the restoration of Irish liberty, but the extensions that followed proved this to be a false dawn.

Having taken power after the fall of the Liberal government, Conservative leader, the Earl of Derby, was quick to acknowledge the role played by the Earl of Kimberley. The “operations after the suspension”, he noted, “were carried on by the Executive, under the authority of the noble Earl whom I see opposite, with an amount of firmness, and, at the same time, of temper and moderation, which reflects the highest credit on the manner in which he discharged the duties of his

⁸⁵ *Daily Express*, 16 Jul., 1866. NLI, Larcom Papers, MS 7679.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ Sung to the air of ‘*Tyrolese Song of Liberty*’. *The Nation*, 11 Aug., 1866. NLI, Larcom Papers, MS 7679.

office.”⁸⁸ Perhaps motivated more by the need to pass an extension of the HCSA (to be discussed below), it is nonetheless a ringing personal endorsement that had the added bonus of locking in Liberal support for further measures for Ireland.

Kimberley’s balancing act continued while in opposition wherein he “promoted a mixed program of discipline and liberalism towards Ireland”, characterized by support for land reform and a review of the status of the established church to alleviate the perceived grievances. In his view, and sympathetic to the oratorical eloquence of Bright during the suspension debate it seems, “rebellion and reform were linked.”⁸⁹ Indeed, this presaged the soon-to-be Prime Minister Gladstone’s later attempts to address the injustices of the British governance of Ireland, as Kimberley explained in a speech on Fenianism that August 1866 saying “It was impossible for England to perform its duty to Ireland so long as no attempt was made to deal with the important question of tenure of land”, and that “military power was not applied in perpetuity to save the landowners from measures which they had neglected to provide, and which otherwise would be forced upon them.”⁹⁰ This could be viewed as a desire to redress the constitutional scales in light of the extraordinary measures adopted during his tenure as Lord Lieutenant. This process began the consolidation of Wodehouse’s long-term reputation not only as a “safe” pair of administrative hands but as a politician who “did not make mistakes”.⁹¹ As ‘Uncle Kim’ to the next generation of Liberals in the 1880s and 1890s he was seen “less as a political general than as an embodiment of the Liberal tradition; someone who had been with the party from the first and who would remain loyal to its founding ideals, even when they, as younger men, could not.”⁹²

As for Ireland, the commissioner of the Dublin Metropolitan Police described the impact of the suspension, saying,

⁸⁸ HL Deb., 6 Aug., 1866. Vol. 184, cc 2075.

⁸⁹ Powell, ‘The Life of John Wodehouse, First Earl of Kimberley’, 105.

⁹⁰ Originally *Daily News* – syndicated by the *Dublin Evening Mail*. 11 Aug., 1866. NLI, *Larcom Papers*, MS 7679.

⁹¹ Powell, *Liberal by Principle*, 31.

⁹² Wodehouse, *The Journal of John Wodehouse First Earl of Kimberley, for 1862-1902*, 18.

The effects were magical, private Fenian meetings were given up; drilling ceased; the menacing tone of Fenianism so much heard in the streets and public houses was silent, the public alarm subsided, people resumed their ordinary pursuits, and before the end of May Fenianism was forgotten and was apparently extinct, or at least was no longer active.⁹³

It must be acknowledged that the tone of this glowing report is perhaps somewhat over-optimistic given the transnational nature of the movement. While immediate indicators of Fenian activity in Ireland had dropped, they were far from “extinct”, its proponents having instead migrated to Britain or returned to the United States.

The process surrounding the suspension also proved a catalyst for the ways in which the British state extended its control over political prisoners, particularly its internees. This might be viewed as contributing to the “paper empire” described by Patrick Joyce as normalizing the information-gathering capabilities of the modern “technostate”.⁹⁴ Brendán Mac Suibhne and Amy Martin present an insightful analysis of the role that photography played in the aftermath of suspension. The large collection of ‘Photograph and Description’ forms entering the Constabulary and Castle archives, “constituted the basis of the most extensive series of alphabetical files ever before compiled on Irish political activists.”⁹⁵ As such they have not only proven an unmatched source for future historians, but also represent a “significant encroachment by the state on its subjects’ rights and a radical shift in the use of photographic technology.”⁹⁶ While the routine photographing of prisoners was beginning to gain pace both in Britain and internationally, the distinction noted here is that the aftermath of the HCSA was the first time at which untried detainees were subject to such potentially invasive forms of documentation.⁹⁷ Interestingly, the development of liberal sensitivities to the suspension of *Habeas Corpus* was more pronounced among the returning Americans. Of the 5 per cent of detainees who refused to allow their photographs be taken, over half had previously served in either the Union or Confederate army.

⁹³ Commissioner Lake to Chief Secretary, 23rd Jan., 1867. NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 1729, 1316. Later quoted in “Report on Fenianism”. NLI, Larcom Papers, MS 7,517, p 175.

⁹⁴ Joyce, *The State of Freedom*, 10–13.

⁹⁵ Brendán Mac Suibhne and Amy Martin, ‘Fenians in the Frame: Photographing Irish Political Prisoners, 1865-68’, *Field Day Review* 1 (January 2005): 109.

⁹⁶ Suibhne and Martin, 102.

⁹⁷ Suibhne and Martin, 104. For the struggle of those prosecuted by special commission prior to HCSA in English prisons see Leon Radzinowicz and Roger Hood, “The Status of Political Prisoners in England: The Struggle for Recognition” *Virginia Law Review*, Vol. 65. No. 8 (Dec 1978), 1421-1457.

Although it must be virtually impossible to prove unequivocally, Mac Suibhne and Martin's assertion that they had "a more developed sense than civilian prisoners of the rights of individuals in relation to the state apparatus," the balance of evidence certainly lends itself to this interpretation.⁹⁸ In this way, the HCSA can be viewed as facilitating an expansion of the bureaucratic infrastructural power of the state.

Anomalies of Implementation

For many, the passage of the HCSA was shrouded in the fear that by suspending constitution guarantees, a slew of other abuses would inevitably follow. Here, the wording of the legislation is critical, as each warrant issued was the direct responsibility of the Lord Lieutenant and was intended only to apprehend and detain persons suspected "of conspiracy against her Majesty's person or government."⁹⁹ Consequently, unlike his Canadian counterparts, any resultant abuses of the legislation would fall squarely at the feet of Wodehouse and his successors. While in the first systematic analysis of Irish coercive legislation in 1881, I.S. Leadam argued that "the operation of the *Habeas Corpus* suspension appears to have been confined to Fenianism", the group of Fenians who suffered worst under the suspension (the Irish Fenians) were not those against whom the Act was specifically targeted.¹⁰⁰ However, no incident presented itself like that of the Montreal detective, Andrew Cullen, who was discovered to have arrested a burglar under the cover of the suspension, an act described by the presiding judge in the subsequent trial as "a clear abuse of process."¹⁰¹

The clearest institutional abuse emerged in the way the Post Office dealt with the distribution of newspapers that were already suppressed in Ireland. This had become a problem because many banned titles were now printed in America and posted to Ireland. Writing to the Postmaster General, Lord Stanley of Alderley, Wodehouse noted, "It seems to me impossible that we can allow a newspaper which is avowedly the organ of a confederacy to overthrow the Queen's authority,

⁹⁸ Suibhne and Martin, 104.

⁹⁹ Isaac Saunders Leadam, *Coercive Measures in Ireland, 1830-1880* (London: National Press Agency, 1881), 54.

¹⁰⁰ Leadam, 27.

¹⁰¹ Wilson, "The Suspension of Habeas Corpus and the D'Arcy McGee Affair, 1867-68", 85-120.

to be circulated by the Queen's own offices."¹⁰² This is an interesting example of the state's own infrastructural power being used against itself. Having been given written assurance by the Irish law officers as to the treasonable content of the *Irish People* (now being published in New York), Wodehouse sought to have it seized by the Post Office before collection. Fearful of the charge of overreaching, he assured Alderley that it was not his intention to introduce the "French system to which of course no parliament would agree." It would, he continued, "only [be] used in extreme cases and any order issued should at once be laid before parliament."¹⁰³ As things stood, the intolerable situation had arisen where the police were required to wait until a member of the public had opened a package containing the *Irish People* before acting to seize the treasonable material, as they had consistently and legally been doing for several months. "Is not this an indefensible inconsistency?" wrote Wodehouse to George Grey. "The police have everywhere acted on the order to seize the papers without as far as I can hear remonstrations or opposition: but meantime whilst one department of the government seizes the papers, another circulates them through the country."¹⁰⁴

The resolution of the difficulty saw two diametrically opposed positions emerge. In the words of a confidential memo circulated by Whitehall:

It is to be observed that the Irish Law Officers hold that the seizure of a treasonable newspaper by the Government in its passage through the Post Office is clearly justified by the Common Law, whereas the Law Officers of England, though agreeing generally with the Irish Law Officers as to the course to be pursued, appear to think that legislation is necessary to give validity to such an act, or at all events desirable.¹⁰⁵

The Cabinet were extremely reluctant to countenance such legislation, recognizing that it was "a power grossly abused in France, and which Parliament would be unwilling to give" unless in the most exceptional of cases.¹⁰⁶ Obviously, the Post Office Acts did "not contemplate such an exigency as that which has arisen."¹⁰⁷ This left both sides struggling to deal appropriately with the situation.

¹⁰² Wodehouse to Postmaster General, 25 Feb., 1866. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4043, 35-37.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Wodehouse to George Grey, 1 Mar., 1866. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4043, 75-7.

¹⁰⁵ George Grey to Wodehouse, 10 Mar., 1866. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4043, 145-6.

¹⁰⁶ George Grey to Wodehouse, 3 Mar., 1866. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4043, 114-5.

¹⁰⁷ Confidential Memorandum, Mr Waddington to Mr Greenwood 10 Mar., 1866. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C, 4043. 147-51.

A resolution came about as a result of a meeting between the Irish and British Law officers held in early March 1866 at which it was determined that no formal action should be taken. Here the unpalatable political decision was avoided and the intricate legal difficulty postponed. Instead of introducing legislation, it was decided that unilateral action on the part of the Lord Lieutenant should be taken and that they would deal with the consequences if they arose later. Effectively, they were relying on the Fenians not to challenge the action, presumably on the assumption that to pursue a legal challenge against the Post Office for tampering with the mail would immediately expose the claimant to suspicion of being a Fenian and thus subject to arrest under HCSA. The law officers were confident that “the treasonable nature of the newspaper in question would furnish a good defence to any proceeding which may be taken against the Post Office Authorities for the non-delivery or detention of it.”¹⁰⁸ While such bilateral meetings between the law officers were not an altogether uncommon occurrence, that such length were needed indicates the degree of sensitivity to the issues at stake.¹⁰⁹

Wodehouse proceeded as advised, but again betrayed his liberal inclinations (or perhaps his political astuteness) by only sending written instructions to the two post offices most likely to deal with a large volume of such treasonable material, Cork and Dublin. Furthermore, he phrased his instructions so as to allow a degree of discretion to the postal officials. These actions contrast starkly with the situation in England where the interception of Fenian post was far more closely regulated. Jenkins describes the process whereby the “chief constables charged with this sensitive task were cautioned only to open letters and forward a copy of the contents to the Home Office if they had first obtained a warrant.”¹¹⁰ Without a warrant the postmasters were only permitted to make an external examination of the letters. Wodehouse exploited (perhaps abused) the cover provided by the suspension of the constitution but added that, “It would be

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ The author would like to acknowledge the help of Professor Norma Dawson, President of the Irish Legal History Society, for her help in contextualizing the interaction of the two sets of law officers. Personal correspondence 16th March, 2013.

¹¹⁰ Jenkins, *The Fenian Problem*, 116.

natural to reconsider the order when the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act expires.”¹¹¹ This disparity of treatment indicates both the continued desire for at least the veneer of propriety, but also the willingness to exploit the flexibility provided by the HCSA.

Here, the transnational dimension became amplified, as difference in treatment between domestic and foreign publications emerged. Actions against a potentially treasonable article entitled “National Independence” in the *Nation* earlier than February had been ignored by the Executive for fear of radicalizing the newspaper and its readership. Wodehouse was worried that “if we prosecute the ‘*Nation*’ we shall heal the split [between the moderate and physical force nationalists] at once, and make the ‘*Nation*’ faction, which small though it is, is not without talent and some influence” a more formidable political force.¹¹² But this did not stop Wodehouse from extending his extraordinary measures to include three more *imported* newspapers. By mid-April the *Irish American*, the *Fenian Brotherhood*, and the San Francisco *Irish People* were to be “stopped in the same way as the New York *Irish People*.”¹¹³ Grey in the Home Office agreed with these measures.¹¹⁴ While no precise figures are available, Wodehouse acknowledged to Clarendon that the Post Office had “sent a great number of intercepted papers to us”, indicating that at least one significant abuse had emerged.

Implementation

An important disparity emerged between the rhetoric surrounding the passage of the HCSA and the manner of its implementation. It was designed to decapitate the organization by imprisoning its leaders, but resulted in the incarceration of its rank and file. The strategy was explained to Grey and developed in consultation with the Irish Lord Chancellor, Maziere Brady. Wodehouse outlined to Grey that “we determined that arrests should be made of the principal conspirators known to the police in Dublin and its vicinity.”¹¹⁵ The number of arrests in this initial

¹¹¹ Wodehouse to Lord Stanley of Alderney, 14 Mar., 1866. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4043, 163-5.

¹¹² Wodehouse to Attorney General, 20 Feb., 1866. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4044, 43-4

¹¹³ George Grey to Wodehouse, 16 Apr., 1866. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4046, 5-6.

¹¹⁴ George Grey to Wodehouse, 18 Apr., 1866. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4046, 35-6.

¹¹⁵ Wodehouse to George Grey, 17 Feb., 1866. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4042, 53-6.

sweep was a relatively modest 93, but with more taken up in the days that followed. Interestingly, on the first night of arrests those taken into custody broke down as: 38 (41 per cent) Irish-American, 36 (39 per cent) from different places in England (mostly Irish by birth), with the remaining 19 (20 per cent) not classified, with Wodehouse unable to determine at that time how many of the Irish-Americans were American-born.¹¹⁶ This virtually even distribution of Irish-American and British-based Fenian in the initial wave of arrests somewhat undermines the assertions of both Wodehouse and the Government as to the primacy of the transatlantic element as justification for the suspension.

The table below, however, shows that the arrests grew rapidly, but peaked within eight weeks when the number of detainees began to fall week on week. At no point between April and July (the time period for which Wodehouse himself requested returns from the Governor of Mountjoy) did the number of arrests come anywhere close to the number of releases. It could be argued that the degree of oversight by Wodehouse over the minutiae of the arrests displayed a firm liberal inclination to stop the situation from spiralling out of control, or even from any charges of abuse of power, and are consistent with Powell’s description of Wodehouse as ‘Liberal By Principle’. However, the existence of 389 *Habeas Corpus* prisoners in Irish prisons presented the incoming Tory administration with a practical problem to overcome before the closing of parliament and the expiry of the original suspension act.

Table 1.1 Arrest and Release of HCSA Prisoners, April-June 1866

Week ending (1866)	23-Apr	30-Apr	14-May	21-May	28-May	04-Jun	11-Jun	18-Jun	25-Jun	02-Jul
Persons in Custody	604	581	535	490	477	457	443	422	403	389
Discharged During the Week	47	29	30	42	16	29	15	26	19	18
Warrants for arrest issued	2	6	7	9	6	9	2	3	6	3

Source: compiled from returns in the Bodl., Kim. MS Eng B 2047, 116-29.

HCSA Continuance – August 1866 and February 1867

The issue of extension of coercive legislation, so often overlooked, reveals the ways in which the security landscape evolved. Subsequent justifications invariably

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

reveal a radically different set of concerns from the original debate. In terms of the theoretical framework provided by Agamben, it is interesting to note the role played by the formalization of exceptional legislation. He proposes that over-reliance on coercive and exceptional legislation fundamentally alters the power relations within the subject country. Agamben argued that “this transformation of a provisional and exceptional measure into a technique of government threatens radically to alter [...] the structure and meaning of the traditional distinction between constitutional forms”, a situation clearly mirrored in Ireland.¹¹⁷ This acceptance of the exceptional nature of the legislation is also seen in the shifting voting patterns. The 364 Ayes to 6 Noes from February become 105 to 31 by August – a dramatic proportional shift, but with only a third of the original MPs casting their vote.

The illiberality of the suspension extensions was also evident in the operational terms of the acts. The three initial acts (17 February 1866, 10 August 1866, and 26 February 1867) suspended *Habeas Corpus* for six months each, whereas in 31 May 1867 a further ten months was added, and then on 28 February 1868 a thirteen-month term was permitted. The subsequent Peace Preservation Acts (1870) and its three continuances again extended the term of the act beginning with 16 months (extended to 26 months), and later (1873 and 1875) running for two-year terms.¹¹⁸ A more detailed examination of this trend throughout the century might yield interesting insights. Ó Broin’s description of the security environment as “still roughly the situation when a renewal of the suspension for a further term was later considered”, clearly requires re-evaluation.¹¹⁹

The move for renewal of the suspension in August 1866 proceeded in a more genteel manner and was motivated by pragmatism, but with counterinsurgency concerns still evident. Compared with the rushed initial suspension an almost leisurely six days elapsed between Commons and Lords debates. The continuance was also illustrative of the impact of the initial act. Apart

¹¹⁷ Agamben, *State of Exception*, 2.

¹¹⁸ Leadam, *Coercive Measures in Ireland, 1830-1880*, 36.

¹¹⁹ Ó Broin, *Fenian Fever*, 45.

from the acknowledged desire to maintain the suppression of the conspiracy, the pressing issue at hand was what should become of the prisoners who remained in custody under warrant from the Lord Lieutenant, rather than simply an alarmed reaction to a clear and present threat. Critically, it should be noted that the extension of the suspension marks a significant step away from the liberal 'harm principle' so eloquently evoked by Mill in *On Liberty*. It now shifted towards a more sustained use of exceptional powers to deal with threats that ultimately led to the notorious 'Westmeath Acts' of 1871, which formalized the arrest and detention without trial of persons reasonably suspected of membership in any secret society, regardless of either their goals or the means of attaining those goals.¹²⁰

Upon taking office, the newly appointed Attorney-General John E. Walsh wrote to Lord Lieutenant Abercorn to outline his opinion as early as 19 July, warning him that "it would be in a high degree dangerous to the public peace to discharge as many disaffected Fenians in the short space of time" remaining before the statute would lapse.¹²¹ Extraordinary powers were the only remedy because "the ordinary course of the law is practically inapplicable. The information on which they have been arrested would generally not be sufficient to warrant a Magistrate in committing them for trial or holding them." Thus it would be "impolitic" to bring men to trial in the ordinary course of events with the "certain prospect of acquittal".¹²² The bipartisan support for these measures was solidified with the stated approval of both the former Attorney-General (James Lawson) and Under Secretary Larcom, who agreed that the "continuation of the Act is most imperatively required."¹²³

All levels of the Irish administrations were in agreement, and so the debate moved to Westminster. The new Chief Secretary, Lord Naas, went armed not only with the opinions of the law officers but also with draft memoranda from the Irish Office and an opinion from the Crown Solicitor outlining the efficiency with which

¹²⁰ W. E. Vaughan, *A New History of Ireland, Volume V: Ireland Under the Union, I: 1801-1870: 5* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 770; Niall Whelehan, 'Labour and Agrarian Violence in the Irish Midlands, 1850-1870', *Saothar* 37 (December 2012), 7-17.

¹²¹ Walsh to Abercorn, 18 Jul., 1866. NLI, Mayo Papers, MS 43,886/6.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Memorandum. Crown Solicitor Anderson, (n.d.) August 1866. NLI, Mayo Papers, MS 43,886/6.

all but the most hardened remaining prisoners were being discharged. The Dublin Metropolitan Police Office drafted a similar report in time for the upcoming Commons debate, and noted “their incarceration, together with the continued suspension of the *Habeas Corpus Act*, will undoubtedly have the effect of deterring others from taking their places.” Not only had there been no concern expressed by the “well disposed and industrious members of the community” with whom the Chief of the Detective department had consulted, but if the suspension was to be removed, the Commissioners of Police would have “no hesitation in expressing their opinion that in the course of the approaching winter the conspiracy would be revived to an alarming extent.”¹²⁴

The extension presented a significant methodological and constitutional dilemma that was not lost on the Commons. Naas was keen to ensure that “as long, therefore, as an organization such as this exists, even in a country so distant as the American Republic, it is necessary that the House should confer, and that the Government should hold the power of thwarting and stopping the designs and efforts of these men.”¹²⁵ The impending prorogation of the Commons meant that measures had to be put in place to bridge the six-months gap before the next sitting. Again, J.F. Maguire was the man to point out the numerous objections to the extension, focussing on the diminution of political excitement and the significant drop in crime presented at the Courts of Assize, particularly of serious offences. He placed particular emphasis on “what a dangerous thing it is to transfer power from the police to a body of men, many of whom are carrying on a silent war against the peasantry as relentlessly as ever was waged in the days of Cromwell”, particularly when there was no oversight possible from parliament.¹²⁶

While the new Prime Minister, Lord Derby, acknowledged that more than half of those arrested had been released, having “given security for their future good conduct”, many remained who refused to give such assurances.¹²⁷ Of the 756 arrested in early 1866, 339 remained in prison on 23 July. This presented the

¹²⁴ Report of Dublin Metropolitan Police Office, Dublin Castle, 1 Aug., 1866. NLI, Mayo Papers, MS 43,886/9.

¹²⁵ HC Deb., 2 August 1866. Vol. 184, cc 1916.

¹²⁶ HC Deb., 2 August 1866. Vol. 184, cc 1932.

¹²⁷ HL Deb., 6 August 1866. Vol. 184, cc 2076.

government with a further conundrum: whether to maintain the constitutional suspension, or release onto an unsuspecting public those (potentially) at the heart of the sedition. Speaking in August 1866 in the House of Lords as a Liberal in opposition following the fall of the Russell government, Wodehouse, now the Earl of Kimberley, agreed with Attorney-General Walsh noting that the release would be “exceedingly injurious”, particularly considering that Parliament would not be sitting that autumn and winter, therefore not in a position to re-adopt suspension.¹²⁸

The only significant press opposition to the continuance came from the *Freeman's Journal* who suggested, perhaps somewhat optimistically, “Would it not be more politic to let the Act expire and proclaim an amnesty?”, further claiming that the “prolongation of those unconstitutional powers will have the very opposite to the intended effect.”¹²⁹ This stood in clear opposition to the opinion of Naas, and for all practical purposes it was discounted as foolhardy. It did, however, prefigure the eventual solution of the 1871 Fenian Amnesty, though the Amnesty’s “sweeping and perpetual sentence” of banishment might be viewed as merely a formalization of the *ad hoc* methods employed by Wodehouse’s Executive, which frequently released internees who undertook to emigrate.¹³⁰

In support of what was effectively a continuation of his own initial measure, Kimberley proposed that he was “convinced that the Fenians themselves would acknowledge this measure to be wise and sensible.” Kimberley referred to letters received from “persons who had been confined under my warrant and were subsequently released expressing, I am happy to say, their satisfaction with the manner in which they had been treated during their imprisonment, and stating that it was impossible to blame the Government for taking measures such as any Government with a regard for its security must be expected to take.” Those same writers were, he continued, “perfectly honest in their admissions that they had intended to overthrow the Queen’s Government, but added that they thought the

¹²⁸ HL Deb., 6 August 1866. Vol. 184, cc 2080.

¹²⁹ *Freeman's Journal*, 8 Aug., 1866. NLI, Larcom Papers, MS 7492.

¹³⁰ *The Spectator*, 24 Dec., 1870.

Government perfectly justified in taking means to prevent their success.”¹³¹ While the Conservative administration continued the policy of their predecessors, Naas raised private concerns with the Lord Lieutenant regarding the manner of the policy’s implementation. By November 1866, he confided in Abercorn that he had reason to “doubt the policy of our predecessors in shutting up poor and insignificant men,” preferring instead to focus on the leaders because, as he argued “cage their chiefs and the smaller fry will soon disappear.”¹³² This tacitly acknowledges the failure of Wodehouse’s initial attempt to justify his actions by arresting the ‘dupes’ instead of the ‘plotters’.

The opening of parliament in 1867 offered, from the Crown’s perspective at least, the hope of allowing the HCSA to lapse. The “firm, yet temperate powers entrusted to the Executive... have greatly contributed to restore public confidence,” extolled Queen Victoria on 5 January. It would enable parliament “to dispense with the continuance of any exceptional legislation for that part of my dominions.”¹³³ Naas initially agreed, writing to Abercorn of his hope that, “we should not be obliged to renew the *Habeas Corpus* suspension.” For a range of practical reasons, however, he felt that this inclination should be kept “a dead secret” lest those prisoners considering parole terms might be more likely to remain in Ireland. The secrecy was considered justified and “a great matter, if we could get 30 or 40 of the worst of them out of the country in the next ten days.”¹³⁴ This can be contrasted with Naas’s incoming correspondence that frequently warned that if the Act was withdrawn, the “massacre of loyalists in unprotected places will occur.”¹³⁵

Speaking at the second reading, the Chief Secretary announced that, contrary to indications within the Queen’s Speech that no continuance of exceptional powers in Ireland was necessary, a continuance bill was going ahead. This was not proof that “the Government have been without proper information on

¹³¹ HL Deb., 6 Aug., 1866. Vol. 184, cc 2080.

¹³² Naas to Abercorn, 15 Nov., 1866. PRONI, Abercorn Papers, T2541/VR/85/2.

¹³³ Extract of the Queen’s Speech to the opening of Parliament, reprinted in the *Mail*, 5 Jan., 1867. NLI, Larcom Papers, MS 7492.

¹³⁴ Naas to Abercorn, 24 Jan., 1867. PRONI, Abercorn Papers, T2541/VR/85/7.

¹³⁵ Jas. Rogerson Cotter (Rector of Donoughmore, Co. Cork) to Naas, 16 Feb., 1867. NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 1731, 2779. For similar warnings see, Killarney Magistrates, 18 Feb., 1867. NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 1731, 2780. J.L. Cronin RM to Larcom, 19 Feb., 1867. NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 173, 3455.

the subject, or that their officers have been negligent”, but rather that the transnational character of the problem made the gathering of accurate information more difficult. He anticipated the usual brow-beating by acknowledging that

If he undertook the disagreeable proposal last year with reluctance, that reluctance is much increased now. No man, knowing the advantages of a free constitution... can take part in such a proceeding which consigns an individual to gaol, without the prospect of a speedy trial, without feeling that he is doing an act which notwithstanding the absolute and imperative necessity of the case could justify.¹³⁶

The degree to which this might be considered mere posturing remains an important, but unresolved consideration.

The bipartisan nature of Westminster’s Irish policy at this time was explained by William Henry Ford Cogan, who spoke against the manner of the passage of the extension bill, rather than the bill itself, in terms that Agamben would clearly recognize. “It would be a very bad precedent for this House to set,” he noted, “if we allowed it for a moment to be assumed that a bill of this nature suspending constitutional liberty in a portion of the United Kingdom, should be allowed to be introduced and pass as a matter of course.”¹³⁷ Given that the original act was introduced by a Liberal administration and that the extension act was in the hands of the Conservatives, Cogan saw that the sliver lining in the current events was that for both parties “alike have admitted the fact that the land question is one which requires to be legislated upon, and one which it is the duty of this house to solve.”¹³⁸ The only potential benefit in the extension was that it highlighted, and therefore might ultimately help to address, Irish injustices. Ultimately, the pattern of extension demonstrates the slow formalization, centralization, and extended reach of the state’s infrastructural power.

Transnational Perspectives

The suspension of *Habeas Corpus* in Ireland was as transnational in its origins as it was in its implementation and effects. Not only did many of the revolutionaries who fell foul of the legislation live transnational lives, but they also experienced a

¹³⁶ HC Deb, 21 Feb., 186. Vol. 185, 728.

¹³⁷ *Post*, 22 Feb., 1867. NLI, Larcom Papers, MS 7697. Cogan was the Liberal MP for Kildare, and Justice of the Peace.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

wide disparity in the implementation of the 'Great Writ', whether in continental Europe, throughout the broader British Empire, or across the Atlantic world. The 1860s provides numerous international suspensions of *Habeas Corpus* against which the Irish situation can be considered. It is useful to note that in *States of Exception*, Agamben divides the international approach to exceptional powers into two categories, namely countries for whom recourse is formally and unambiguously enshrined within legislation and constitution (such as Italy, France and Germany), and those "those that prefer not to regulate the problem explicitly," such as Britain and America.¹³⁹ While those in the former category encapsulate a fundamentally different approach, and are of less overall relevance to the process under discussion, it is interesting to note that in the case of Italy under the Albertine Statute "the kingdom resorted to proclaiming a state of siege many times: in Palermo and the Sicilian provinces in 1862 and 1866, in Naples in 1862," demonstrating the wide range of possible points of comparison.¹⁴⁰

Of more relevance is *Habeas Corpus* suspension in the broader English-speaking Atlantic world, whose conceptualization of the writ emerged from a common root. President Lincoln's suspension after the outbreak of the US Civil War in 1861 and the subsequent conflict between the President and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Roger B. Taney, provides an interesting point of comparison to that of Ireland. This is particularly the case when we note that many of those who would eventually fall foul to the 1866 HCSA in Ireland were emerging from this militarized, extra-constitutional environment. Father Jon Bannon, a Confederate chaplain, returned to Ireland in late 1863 to try and limit the appeal of direct recruitment into the Federal army of Irish emigrants. He printed 2,000 bills to be posted in Irish ports to attempt to dissuade this recruitment, promoting the idea that Yankee liberalism had disappeared, saying, "The right of Habeas Corpus is now suspended – the home of liberty is now the head quarters of a military despotism – the great Republic of the West now no longer exists – life and liberty is

¹³⁹ Agamben, *State of Exception*, 10.

¹⁴⁰ Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 17.

at stake.”¹⁴¹ Such experiences and expectations of *Habeas Corpus* play an important role in the assessment of Wodehouse’s decision to eventually seek suspension.

In his detailed examination of the role played by Abraham Lincoln’s suspension of *Habeas Corpus* during the US Civil War, Brian McGinty argues for its importance as a proxy for military victory, and in that way it resonates with the developing situation in Ireland in early 1866. The scandal, outrage, and significance of the events surrounding the suspension in the US made challenges to the suspension “a legal battle of enormous importance to the war, to the nation, and ultimately to the world, for foreign peoples and nations all watched anxiously for its outcome.”¹⁴² The very question of how a ‘liberal’ state could suppress an internal insurrection and still maintain its liberal, democratic principles was at stake. The significance of the *Ex Parte Merryman* case was that it “affected the conduct of the war itself; and if it did not determine the outcome, it helped to bring it [Federal victory] about.”¹⁴³ In the context of the British suppression of Fenianism in Ireland, the HCSA played an equally significant, perhaps decisive role in the broad-spectrum counterinsurgency policy adopted by the Irish Executive.

Lincoln’s eloquent rhetorical response to his detractors found many resonances in the reluctant adoption of the HCSA in 1866 by Westminster, particularly when he argued, “Are all the laws, but one, to go unexecuted, and the government itself go to pieces, lest that one be violated?”¹⁴⁴ In this instance Lincoln questioned the possibility of an “inherent, and fatal weakness” of all republics that they must be possessed of “a government, [that is either] of necessity, too strong for the liberties of its own people, or too weak to maintain its own existence?”¹⁴⁵ In the case of the Irish Executive, this conundrum was adroitly phrased by Crossman, who has pointed out that “No government turned to extraordinary measures lightly. They were, after all, an admission of failure and although they might

¹⁴¹ David T. Gleeson, *The Green and the Gray: The Irish in the Confederate States of America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 171–2.

¹⁴² Brian McGinty, *The Body of John Merryman: Abraham Lincoln and the Suspension of Habeas Corpus* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 9.

¹⁴³ McGinty, 9.

¹⁴⁴ McGinty, 102.

¹⁴⁵ McGinty, 98, drawn from Basler, Roy P. ed. *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*. Vol 4, 426.

provide a temporary respite ministers had no illusions about their long-term effect." Few, if any, of the extraordinary coercive acts "produced any lasting improvement in the habits or the morals of the people."¹⁴⁶

The reactions in America to the passage of the HCSA can be broken down into three components: the media, the Irish diaspora, and the US government. The media responses included a diversity of opinion, ranging from support to outright condemnation along previously established Catholic/Protestant lines. For the Irish diaspora, the HCSA represented a paradoxical dashing of hopes for the promised rising, while also redoubling the Fenian call to arms to support the cause in the face of an ever-more-evident tyrannical and unjust treatment of the Irish at home. For the US Government, and particularly Secretary of State Seward and President Johnson, however, it threatened to destabilize a newly reached agreement that marked a level of rapprochement in the aftermath of the tensions between Britain and the United States in the wake of the US Civil War.

The Irish Executive's treatment of American-born citizens and naturalized Irish-Americans evoked vitriolic condemnation in the American Press. The *Irish American* of 18 November 1865 lamented that "It would seem that to go from America to Ireland now is an offence against the British government, subjecting the offender to a week's imprisonment at the least, and possibly to more serious consequences."¹⁴⁷ It went on to describe the impact of the searches of persons, property, and correspondence it declared that "Irish-Americans are in still worse plight."¹⁴⁸ Such is the kind of "justices' justice' meted out to the unfortunate people whom the authorities in Ireland choose to arrest on 'suspicion of disaffection', a suspicion that very naturally attaches to every Irishman worthy of the name."¹⁴⁹ The article's author made concerted efforts to ridicule the Irish Executive's caution as a gross overreaction by commenting sarcastically on one such arrest predicated upon the ownership of a "minute vest-pocket revolver, which *formidable*

¹⁴⁶ Crossman, 'Emergency Legislation and Agrarian Disorder in Ireland, 1821-41', 312-13.

¹⁴⁷ *Irish American*, 18 Nov., 1865. NLI, Larcom Papers, MS 7,677.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

armament was undoubtedly designed to blow the British government out of Ireland and the 'Channel Fleet' out of the water."¹⁵⁰

The other major Irish-American Catholic journal, the *Boston Pilot*, saw the proclamation of cities and counties in the same light, making it front page news in February 1866 under the headline "*Excitement in Ireland*". The step from proclamation to suspension aroused yet more ire, prompting the assertion that "if an immediate and radical change be not made in the general government of the country, the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* must be made permanent and martial law proclaimed, to allow the bulk of the people to realize means to quiet the country." Although not reported until the St Patrick's Day edition, the *Pilot* argued that the suspension "lays the neck of Ireland under the heel of Lord Wodehouse, and leaves every honest patriot in the country, for the next twelve months, at the mercy of that recently imported Englishman and his servant."¹⁵¹ Although the timeframe of the bill is inaccurately reported, this shift in attitude is all the more remarkable because this same "imported Englishman", Lord Wodehouse, had been broadly welcomed less than a year and a half earlier by the same paper.¹⁵²

Marta Ramón notes perceptively the paradoxical impact of the HCSA in the United States. On the one hand it "caused a revival of Fenian enthusiasm in America", whereas the nature of the enthusiasm would tend to deflect the attention of the American Fenians away from Ireland, and towards the proposals of the Roberts (or Senate) wing of the Fenians.¹⁵³ The HCSA, therefore, fulfilled the required deterrent effect by persuading the Roberts wing that "action in Ireland had become impracticable."¹⁵⁴ Moreover, the "scores" of IRB members who had "fled to New York after the *Habeas Corpus* suspension added to the general feeling of discontent and demoralization."¹⁵⁵ They were ready to blame the lack of a rising

¹⁵⁰ Ibid. Original Emphasis.

¹⁵¹ *Boston Pilot*, 17 Mar., 1866.

¹⁵² *Boston Pilot*, 16 Nov., 1866

¹⁵³ Marta Ramón, *A Provisional Dictator: James Stephens and the Fenian Movement* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2007), 205.

¹⁵⁴ Ramón, 205.

¹⁵⁵ Ramón, 206.

on O'Mahony rather than the British actions, and thus HCSA could be argued to have had a distinctly destabilizing impact on the American organization to the degree that O'Mahony now threw his weight behind the abortive and ill-judged 'Campobello Fiasco'.¹⁵⁶

One ephemeral and one tangible reaction were directly credited to the HCSA. The first was the opportunity to use unabashed and incendiary rhetoric. Mabel Walker proves the assertion of *The Nation* who observed that Americans were thrown into a "terrible state of excitement" by the act, with John O'Mahony's oratory quoted in the *Cincinnati Enquirer*:

Brothers, the hour of action has arrived. The *habeas corpus* is suspended in Ireland. Our brothers are being arrested by hundreds and thrown into prison. Call your circles together immediately; send us all the aid in your power at once, and in God's name let us start for our destination. Aid!!! Brothers help!!! For God and Ireland !!! God save the green!!!¹⁵⁷

W.S Neidhardt's description of the Executive's action as having "indeed stirred up a hornet's nest" is supported by reference to numerous mass meetings throughout American cities. The Fenian offices in New York were "thronged with visitors, [with] an appearance of renewed activity among the officers of the Fenian Brotherhood."¹⁵⁸ However, by the following month the *Boston Pilot* commented stoically that "any hopes of a rising of the people [of Ireland] seem to have been abandoned."¹⁵⁹

The more tangible element was the financial spur provided to the American Fenians when some \$120,000 worth of bonds for Irish Republic were sold at a meeting in Jones' Woods, New York on 4 March 1866.¹⁶⁰ This figure passed the \$500,000 mark when combined with the \$360,000 from Massachusetts, and other east coast donations.¹⁶¹ Ardent support continued to the point where a resolution

¹⁵⁶ The 'Campobello Fiasco' was the attempted seizure of Campobello Island on the Maine/New Brunswick boarder attempted by John O'Mahony in mid-April 1866. It was an abject failure, serving mainly to expose the rifts in North American Fenianism between the Senate/Roberts wing and the O'Mahony wing of the organization. See, Senior, *The Fenians and Canada*, 90-95.

¹⁵⁷ Mabel G. Walker, *The Fenian Movement* (Colorado Springs, CO: Ralph Myles Pub, 1969), 67-8.

¹⁵⁸ Wilfried Neidhardt, *Fenianism in North America* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1975), 36-37.

¹⁵⁹ *Boston Pilot*. 7 Mar., 1866.

¹⁶⁰ Walker, *The Fenian Movement*, 68.

¹⁶¹ Walker, 69.

suggesting a boycott of sorts was threatened against tradesmen who neglected to buy Irish bonds.¹⁶² The financial issues inevitably brought political consequences. In anticipation of an outbreak, the Fenians brought forward resolutions to pressure Congress, asking the United States to guarantee the bonds of the Irish Republic. In the absence of securing belligerent status (an attempt for this had failed after protest by the British Ambassador at the start of March), this had the potential to lend much needed legitimacy and credibility to the movement.¹⁶³

The American Minister in London was reduced to a clever use of diplomatic back channels to bring some resolution to the issues. A dispatch from Secretary of State Seward to Minister Adams, shown “unofficially and confidentially” to Lord Stanley in the Foreign Office, outlined the Secretary of State’s issues:

The authorities in Ireland properly enough, deny to the U.S. Consul the right of intervention in cases of arrest, except where the person arrested is a native or naturalized citizen of this country. At the same time it is understood that there is no law or regulation in force in Ireland which requires the exhibition of passports by foreigners visiting that country. It has happened several times that American citizens, travelling without passports have been arrested in Ireland and denied the good offices of the United States Consul until they could procure evidence of citizenship to be sent from the U.S.¹⁶⁴

Here, it seems, it is the obvious administrative contradiction as much as the ideological prerogative that upset Seward. “Our own experience during the war” continued Seward, and here the diplomatic issues at hand converged, taught them that during times of *Habeas Corpus* suspension, “prudence in regard to foreign relations” was particularly necessary. In this case, the expedient solution was to inform those Irish-Americans wishing to travel to carry passports in order that the unnecessary and unhelpful diplomatic difficulties associated with the smooth implementation of the act might be averted.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² Walker, 69.

¹⁶³ Walker, 66–70. For a more detailed geographical breakdown of financial contributions to the Fenian Brotherhood see, Kearns, ‘Geography of Fenianism: Full Research Report’. The figures, however, fail to show the timeframe of the contributions making it impossible to judge how these contributions may have been impacted by the HCSA.

¹⁶⁴ Seward to Adams, 23 Sept., 1867. NLI, Mayo Papers, MS 11,188/19. Original Emphasis.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

In some ways, however, the passport issue that dominated much of the formal transatlantic correspondence between American Minister Adams in London and Secretary Seward obscures the degree to which events in Washington had influenced Ireland. Why was protest limited to unofficial and confidential discussion at diplomatic soirées, instead of being used as a major international punching bag at Britain's expense, at the same time as the *Alabama* claims were raising the diplomatic pressure between Britain and the US that would remain unresolved until the Treaty of Washington in 1871? Peter Vronsky, utilizing previously unexamined source material within the Bruce papers in Rochester, NY, and extensive examination of *US Papers Relating to Foreign Affairs*, highlights the importance of an informal meeting between the British Consul in Washington, Sir Frederick Bruce and President Johnson in February 1866. After being "snuck in through the back door to meet the President" under the guise of a social visit to the "ladies of the White House", he received assurances from the President that, contrary to public assurances, he was decidedly anti-Fenian.¹⁶⁶ Anxious to avoid the "*imperium in imperio* the Irish wished to create in this country" and weary of the "inconsistency of the Irish", Johnson and Seward sought to play both sides of the fence.¹⁶⁷

This confidential understanding reached between the US and British Governments had practical implications for the way in which the HCSA was implemented in Ireland. The agreement came within a fortnight of the passage of the HCSA and threatened to destabilize the new *ad hoc* arrangement. Minister Adams in London, despite his personal opinion that the British had shown "little wisdom" in their handling of the HCSA and his admission that most arrested were "more or less implicated", instructed American Consul William West in Dublin to "investigate the respective circumstances of each case, and where there were no grounds for imprisonment, to write a *polite letter of protest* to Under Secretary

¹⁶⁶ Peter Vronsky, *Ridgeway – The American Fenian Invasion and the 1866 Battle that Made Canada* (Toronto: Penguin Group, 2011), 26.

¹⁶⁷ Report from Bruce to Clarendon, 9 Feb., 1866. Partly in Vronsky, *Ridgeway*, 27. More fully discussed in: Eric Foner, "Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction: A British View", *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (Aug., 1975), 385.

Larcom and report all cases involving harsh treatment.”¹⁶⁸ Thus a potentially incendiary situation had been defused by the use of diplomatic back channels that resulted in the sharing of intelligence between the British, American, and Canadian authorities, that represented “an extraordinary display of trust between the British and Americans” despite the increased tension associated with the HCSA.¹⁶⁹

The impact of this diplomatic intrigue for Ireland was profound. Wodehouse, in one of his final letters as Lord Lieutenant, explained the solution to the transnational complexity of the Irish HCSA to Clarendon. He found a way to placate all those around him when he noted that he fully appreciated

[...] the great importance of conciliating President Johnson and Seward, but he must look also to the effect on people here. If we were to release at once the whole batch of U.S. ‘citizens’ the measure would be attributed by the Irish to everything but its true cause. We should seriously discourage and perplex those who are loyal and we should raise the spirits of the disaffected who watch narrowly every move we make. The only safe plan of meeting the reasonable wishes of the U.S. Government will be (in my judgment) to continue to release the prisoners in whom they are interested one by one so as not to excite attention here.¹⁷⁰

This demonstrates that the implementation of Irish coercive policy was almost entirely dependent on decisions made between diplomats in London and Washington. Wodehouse did continue to release the Irish-American veterans, and proportionally much faster than their British or Irish counterparts. The Irish-Americans were incarcerated for an average of only 185 days, whereas (depending on their arrest date) the remainder of those seen as threats remained imprisoned for up to a year and a half, or were released on promise of emigration to America, with only 42 of such parolees re-arrested.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁸ Bernadette Whelan, *American Government in Ireland, 1790-1913 – A History of the US Consular Service* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), 170; Barry Kennerk, ‘A Dublin Consul under Siege: American Reactions to the Habeas Corpus Suspension Crisis of 1866-1868’, *Dublin Historical Record* 63, no. 1 (April 2010): 18–28.

¹⁶⁹ Peter Vronsky, “*Conspiracy Theory: United States, Britain, China, intelligence failure and the Anglo-American plot to deceive Irish-American voters and contain the Fenian invasion of Canada, June 1866*” University of Toronto, June 2013, 23. The author is grateful to Dr. Vronsky for access to this working paper and mutual discussions regarding the events.

¹⁷⁰ Wodehouse to Clarendon, 29 Jun., 1866. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4049, 115-6.

¹⁷¹ The incarceration information presented here is derived from an analysis of arrest records compiled within “Fenian Arrests and Discharges”, 3/714/1. NAI, Fenian Papers.

Within the British Empire, Upper Canada presents the most relevant context for understanding the Irish *Habeas Corpus* suspension. It should be noted, however, that we might equally look to Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, or even as far afield as New Zealand for other points of comparison.¹⁷² Not only does Canada encapsulate the Fenian, transatlantic, and imperial dimensions, but also illustrates the shifting modes of strategic implementation, moving from the American ‘reactive’ model to the Irish ‘pre-emptive’ model over the period of the ‘Fenian Raids’ 1866-71. The initial ‘reactive’ suspension in Canada came in the immediate aftermath of the failed 1866 Fenian invasion and the Battle of Ridgeway, but was gradually applied as a deterrent measure through numerous other failed raids, and was employed in a highly focused mode in response to the assassination of Thomas D’Arcy McGee. Legal historian Robert Sharp notes that in general terms, Canadian *Habeas Corpus* flowed “directly from and is largely simply a reflection of the English law”, further highlighting the need for a transnational comparison.¹⁷³ The Canadian situation, however, was drawing on more contemporary *Habeas Corpus* legislation than existed in Ireland.¹⁷⁴

The initial suspension was fundamentally reactive in character, coming a full six days after the failed invasion on the Niagara peninsula. Writing to Edward Cardwell, Secretary of State for the Colonies, Viscount Monck (Canadian Governor-General) outlined the intentions of the Executive Council and legislature “at once to suspend the *Habeas Corpus Act*, and to extend to Lower Canada the Act at present in operation in Upper Canada (Consolidated Statutes. Upper Canada, cap. 90), providing for the trial by Militia courts-martial of the [Fenian] prisoners.”¹⁷⁵ The exercise of the power of arrest was granted “with or without warrant” to virtually

¹⁷² Edward MacDonald, ‘Who’s Afraid of the Fenians? The Fenian Scare on Prince Edward Island, 1865-1867’, *Acadiensis: Journal of the History of the Atlantic Region* 38, no. 1 (January 2009): 33–51; James Cameron, ‘Fenian Times in Nova Scotia’, *Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society* 37 (1970): 103–52; Jill Bender, ‘The “Piniana” Question: Irish Fenians and the New Zealand Wars’, in *Ireland in an Imperial World: Citizenship, Opportunism, and Subversion*, ed. Michael De Nie, Timothy McMahon, and Paul Townend (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 111–30.

¹⁷³ Robert Sharpe, ‘Review of The Law of Habeas Corpus in Canada by D.A. Cameron Harvey’, *The University of Toronto Law Journal* 24, no. 4 (Autumn 1974): 454.

¹⁷⁴ For a detailed discussion of the 1862 *Habeas Corpus Act* (25 Vict., Cap.20) see the case of *Ex Parte Anderson* (1861) in Elihu Lauterpacht, *International Law Reports* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 64.

¹⁷⁵ Dispatch of Viscount Monck to Edward Cardwell, 8 June 1866, *Correspondence respecting the Recent Fenian Aggression upon Canada* (London, Harrison and Sons, February 1867), 14.

all members of any branch of state power, from Army and Navy officers right down to Militia and Volunteer Militia officers, non-commissioned officers, or men. This gave it the appearance of a genuinely sweeping measure.¹⁷⁶ The *Toronto Daily Telegraph* was quick to support the Canadian parliament in their measures by noting that it would “provide a ready and fitting punishment for the wretches who try to cover with the cloak of patriotism deeds of violence and murder.”¹⁷⁷

The power of oversight, however, was considerably strengthened by three separate measures. The first required that a clerk of the Executive Council retrospectively sanction all arrest within fourteen days. This allowed Irish-Canadian politicians, such as Thomas D’Arcy McGee, to exercise at least some political influence and potentially “veto the decisions of local magistrates.”¹⁷⁸ The second measure was a personal instruction on the part of the Prime Minister and Attorney General, John A Macdonald, who issued a circular to local magistrates in which he urged them to avoid “hasty and ill-judged arrests.”¹⁷⁹ He further advised that “No arrest should be made on mere suspicion, nor without information on oath stating specific facts to establish a *prima facie* case of treason.”¹⁸⁰ Macdonald’s actions were greeted favourably by the *Canadian Freeman*, who noted that the stern warning to the Crown attorneys and magistrates was “of a piece with the broad and liberal policy which he has followed out since the commencement of the Fenian troubles.”¹⁸¹ The third measure was the imposition of a retrospective financial penalty for those who knowingly engaged in unjustified arrests. Such fines might amount to “as much as £500”, and would act as a further indemnity against abuse. These measures combined to ensure that Macdonald was “substantially correct” when he argued that the June 1866 suspension had not been “harshly or improperly used.”¹⁸²

¹⁷⁶ Vronsky, *Ridgeway*, 364.

¹⁷⁷ Neidhardt, *Fenianism in North America*, 82.

¹⁷⁸ David A. Wilson, *Thomas D’Arcy McGee, Volume 2 - The Extreme Moderate, 1857-68* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2011), 281.

¹⁷⁹ Wilson, 281.

¹⁸⁰ Quoted in Senior, *The Last Invasion of Canada: The Fenian Raids, 1866-1870*, 126.

¹⁸¹ *Canadian Freeman*, 28 Jun., 1866.

¹⁸² David A. Wilson, ‘The Suspension of Habeas Corpus and the D’Arcy McGee Affair, 1867-68’, in *Canadian State Trials, Volume III*, ed. Barry Wright and Susan Binnie (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 88.

More recently, however, Vronsky has noted that there was widespread abuse of power in the issuing of warrants against Catholics suspected of Fenianism. "All sorts of old scores were settled, and accusation overwhelmingly fell on Catholics." There was also "a spate of arrests of 'suspicious persons' and of those against whom denunciations for Fenianism were sworn."¹⁸³ For his part, D'Arcy McGee recognized that the "suspension of *Habeas Corpus* was a regrettable, but necessary response to the Fenian threat."¹⁸⁴ A synthesis of these positions is taken by Brian Jenkins who noted that "Macdonald's fear that arbitrary arrests would either drive the Catholic Irish into the arms of the Fenians or out of Canada ensured that this form of harassment was quickly discontinued."¹⁸⁵

The continuation of the suspension marked a self-conscious shift from a reactive (American) to a deterrent (Irish) model. With the parliamentary session of 1867 coming to a close in November, Macdonald was keen to avoid prorogation without a suspension in place, as Lord Naas had done the previous summer. Both Antoine-Aime Dorian (leader of the *Rouges* party) and Timothy Warren Anglin (MP for the Maritimes and prominent Irish nationalist newspaper editor of the *Saint John Morning Freeman*) acquiesced in the suspension in favour of national security.¹⁸⁶ Anglin, however, unsuccessfully proposed the option of ceding the power of suspension to the Governor-General in Council, to be used in reaction to any threat that arrived, an example of a possible homogenization of approach between Ireland and Canada. Macdonald laid out his maturing view of *Habeas Corpus* suspension by pointing out that "The object of the Bill was to prevent parties from making undue raids upon our territory. If you wait until the evidence is laid before the Governor-in-Council and till a proclamation is issued, parties could make their escape, and the law would be of no avail."¹⁸⁷ As in Ireland, the extensions saw a gradual erosion of the underlying liberality of implementation, with Macdonald allowing the previously lauded term of unquestioned imprisonment extended from two weeks to a month.¹⁸⁸ This was deemed

¹⁸³ Vronsky, *Ridgeway*, 264.

¹⁸⁴ Wilson, *Thomas D'Arcy McGee*, 280.

¹⁸⁵ Jenkins, *The Fenian Problem*, 63.

¹⁸⁶ Wilson, *Thomas D'Arcy McGee*, 327.

¹⁸⁷ John A. Macdonald, Canadian House of Commons Debate (hereafter, CHCD), 29 Nov., 1867, 158.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

necessary by the Liberal leader Edward Blake, who complicated the purely deterrent model by noting that he wanted it “to be distinctly understood that this was not merely a precautionary measure, but that present circumstances justified the suspension”.¹⁸⁹ The measure was adopted without amendment or opposition. The shift from reactive to deterrent usage was best described by the *Irish Canadian* newspaper, who described the continuance as being “designed to hold a rod *in terrorem*” over Irish-Canadian Fenians.¹⁹⁰

The assassination of Thomas D’Arcy McGee in April 1868 resulted in a more surgical use of the suspension, similar to the first night of the original HCSA in Ireland. Although the arrest of D’Arcy McGee’s assassin, James Patrick Whelan, occurred under the normal murder procedures, a further twenty-five to seventy arrests occurred in the months that followed.¹⁹¹ Balancing the need to stop the spread of Fenianism with the desire to avoid radicalizing the Irish-Canadian Catholic population, Macdonald employed suspension arrests in a “highly targeted” manner with the “pattern of releases [tending] to confirm this assessment; people who were arrested on precautionary grounds were generally not incarcerated for long.” As Wilson explored in his detailed treatment of this period immediately following McGee’s assassination, “On balance, the government used the suspension of *Habeas Corpus* with moderation and restraint.”¹⁹² Despite occasional abuse, particularly a number of deaths resulting from illness during imprisonment, it was hoped that the use of the *Habeas Corpus* suspension would encourage problematic Fenian elements to leave the jurisdiction, much in the same mould as the initial Irish 1866 suspension had been employed. In parallel with the Irish suspension, and despite the arrests in Toronto and Guelph having “no discernible connection” with the assassination, the arrests were intended to “muzzle the Irish-Canadian nationalist press and decapitate Canadian Fenianism.”¹⁹³

¹⁸⁹ Edward Blake, CHCD, 29 Nov., 1867, 158.

¹⁹⁰ *Irish Canadian*, 28 Jun., 1866.

¹⁹¹ Wilson, *Canadian State Trials*, 18-22. Contested figures range from Wilson’s estimate of 25 to T.P. Slatery’s unsubstantiated estimate of 70. See T.P. Slatery, *They Got to Find Me Guilty Yet* (Toronto: Doubleday, 1972), 36, quoted in Wilson, 22.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 39.

¹⁹³ Wilson, *Thomas D’Arcy McGee*, 347.

The April 1870 Canadian suspension (the third in four years) was based on Macdonald's assertion that, "information in regard to a Fenian raid had reached him and that the information was of such a nature that it could not be ignored."¹⁹⁴ Macdonald was keenly aware that the use of suspension might backfire. While it may have been more militarily desirable to allow a disorganized and under-funded raid under the leadership of General John O'Neill (new leader of the Roberts/Senate Wing of American Fenianism) to take place and be quashed easily, (as it eventually would be at the Battle of Eccles Hill that June), this was politically unpalatable. That March, Macdonald had argued that he did not think the Canadian government "would be justified if they received positive intelligence of an intended invasion, in not taking *preventative* measures."¹⁹⁵ This was confirmed in parliament when he noted that "the government thought they had no right to play with a subject of that kind, and if they could *prevent* those people coming into the country, so much the better for the public peace."¹⁹⁶ Thus in a deterrent mode, and in coordination with a Militia call up, *Habeas Corpus* suspension in Canada moved closer again, and consciously so, to the Irish usage. When Hon. Mr McCully questioned the right of the Minister for Justice to reinstate the suspension without recourse to both houses of the Canadian legislature, he was defended by Hon. Mr Wilmot who specifically referred to the speed of the passage through the British Commons and Lords of the February 1866 HCSA.¹⁹⁷

Both in Ireland and Canada, suspension worked as a tool to offset the financial burden implicit in relying exclusively on expensive military reinforcements. The cost of garrisoning the vast "Undefended Boarder" between Canada and the United States by either Canadian or Imperial forces was substantial and impractical. Even with significant subsidy, in the form of British regulars, "Canada herself was put to great expense and residents of her border areas were kept in terror, and infinite international ill will was generated."¹⁹⁸ This is particularly true in light of C.P. Stacey's assertion that in the immediate aftermath

¹⁹⁴ Walker, *The Fenian Movement*, 183.

¹⁹⁵ Senior, *The Last Invasion of Canada: The Fenian Raids, 1866-1870*, 143.

¹⁹⁶ John A. Macdonald, CHCD, 14 April 1870, 1030. (my emphasis)

¹⁹⁷ McCully and Wilmot, Canadian Senate Debate, 19 April 1870, 138.

¹⁹⁸ C.P. Stacey, *The Undefended Border: The Myth and the Reality* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association/Public Archives, Ottawa, 1996), 7.

of Confederation, the “Canadian Government and Parliament were not disposed to spend money in the same amounts [as the Imperial parliament].”¹⁹⁹

Not only in implementation but also in justification, both the Canadian government and Irish Executive were keen to place the blame for *Habeas Corpus* suspension on a nebulous ‘other’, and were underwritten by declarations of government trustworthiness. Wilson has argued that the 1866 suspension was framed in terms of external circumstances and government trustworthiness, keeping it largely in line with the de Nei’s “Irish-American Plotters and Irish Dupes” thesis, which abounded in the mid-Victorian British press and their contemporary Canadian counterparts.²⁰⁰ The main voice of opposition to all this was Luther Hamilton Holton, Liberal representative for Châteauguay, who contested Macdonald’s assertion that HC suspension was a necessary reaction to an external threat.²⁰¹ Its implementation in Ireland, he argued, had been as a reaction to the “threatened danger from within.” Although Macdonald repeatedly reasserted his position that the Irish suspension had been “the distinct basis [of] an anticipated invasion from the United States”, Holton was equally quick to retort that “suspension was not so much to meet that anticipation as to baffle the sympathizers with the invasion who might be found in the country itself.”²⁰² Holton felt that HC suspension could only be justified if it could be proven that there was internal support for the external threats. Like the isolated voices of dissent in Westminster, Holton’s argument adds rhetorical texture and cautions the historian from assuming an uncritical acceptance of dominant contemporary political arguments.

In the same way that Hereward Senior argued that the attitudes of Canadian Fenians “were determined by events in Ireland and [...] in the United States as well”, this section has argued that the responses of governments across the

¹⁹⁹ Stacey, 11.

²⁰⁰ Nie, ‘A Medley Mob of Irish-American Plotters and Irish Dupes’; Wilson, ‘The Suspension of Habeas Corpus and the D’Archy McGee Affair, 1867-68’, 5. For a Canadian example see, *Leader* (Toronto), 6 Mar., 1866.

²⁰¹ *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/holton_luther_hamilton_10E.html accessed 1 December 2013.

²⁰² John A Macdonald, Luther Holton, CHCD 14 Apr., 1870, 1031-2.

Atlantic world was shaped by an equally broad range of influences.²⁰³ We may conclude that the Canadian government's reaction to Fenianism was deeply influenced by the virtually contemporaneous actions of the Irish Executive, making the point of comparison particularly useful and highlighting the transnational importance of *Habeas Corpus* suspension.

* * *

Writing a year after the eventual rising, Chadwick Healey painted a scathing picture of the ability of the British law to deal with potentially existential threats. In his pamphlet, *How to Deal with Fenianism and to Adapt our Criminal law to the Times we live in*, he described the situation in ornate language reminiscent of the imagery used by the *New York Times* quoted in the introduction above. "If the lions and tigers in the Zoological Gardens were to escape from their dens" he argued, "and prowl about the streets of London, should we abstain from every endeavour to destroy them till they had torn some victim to pieces?"²⁰⁴ The legal system needed a complete overhaul because it was "imperilled by the protective regulations laid down for its preservation"²⁰⁵ The judges may know the law, but they were far from capable of dispensing justice, which should now be entrusted to

men of known integrity, of enlightened minds and sound judgment, and to empower them singly or collectively; with or without juries, as the case might be, to judge all persons inculpated as perpetrators of overt acts of a criminal nature, or of leading lives inconsistent with the rights or well being of others.²⁰⁶

This illiberal and authoritarian view of jurisprudence, fuelled no doubt by the Clerkenwell explosion (and the move towards terrorism as opposed to insurgency) indicated a move toward extreme views not only amongst the Fenians, who increasingly came to rely upon "skirmishing" and dynamite campaigns, but also within the legal profession itself.²⁰⁷

²⁰³ Senior, *The Fenians and Canada*. Preface, i.

²⁰⁴ Chadwick Healey, *How to Deal with Fenianism and to Adapt Our Criminal Law to the Times We Live In* (London: Waterlow and Sons, 1868), 4.

²⁰⁵ Healey, 7.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁷ For more detail on these campaigns see: Niall Whelehan, *The Dynamiters: Irish Nationalism and Political Violence in the Wider World, 1867-1900* (Cambridge University Press, 2012.)

To conclude with a broader picture, it must be acknowledged that in a fully integrated counterinsurgency system, in which multiple elements are at play, assessing the impact of one element, divorced from all others, is highly problematic. However R.V Comerford has argued that, “The hundreds of arrests made over the following months [February to July of 1866] had struck a far more severe blow at the movement than had the *Irish People* arrests of 1865.”²⁰⁸ This emphatic description offers at least a sense of the comparative impact and sweeping success achieved by the HCSA. The degree to which we can agree with McGinty on the equal importance of victory on the battlefield and the courtroom in the American context, stands up to close scrutiny when applied to the British reaction to the Fenian threat in the mid 1860s. Similarly, the Agamben thesis provides a valuable theoretical framework with which to consider the broader ideological and constitutional implications.

The strategic success of the HCSA is best assessed transnationally because those were the terms in which the legislation was initially framed and implemented. In a bitter diatribe against the perceived follies of Fenianism, the *New York Times* lauded the preventative steps taken by Westminster (and by extension the Irish Executive) who acted, “with a promptness worthy of imitation.”²⁰⁹ They argued, somewhat hyperbolically, that if President Buchanan acted with such insight in 1860, then the whole US Civil War might have been averted. For them, the “entire machinery of insurrection, the very soul of the revolution, would have melted and passed away under the wise hand of a real Government.”²¹⁰ The HCSA had caused such “consternation” amongst Irish-Americans that by 8 March a “stampede of American Fenians” was noted to be fleeing Ireland, demonstrating the need for and perceived success of the HCSA.²¹¹ Not only had the suspension of *Habeas Corpus* worked, but it was judged to have done so by its contemporaries.

²⁰⁸ R.V. Comerford, “Gladstone’s first Irish Enterprise, 1864-1870” in Vaughan, *New History*, 438.

²⁰⁹ *New York Times*, 3 Mar., 1866.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ *New York Times*, 8 Mar., 1866.

Though W.E. Vaughan has noted that throughout Irish history “the ‘coercion’ acts [HCSA amongst them] were never regarded as permanent”, this partially belies the fact that the seriousness of such acts and the duration of their implementation might be viewed as having existed on a continuum rather than in a binary sense. What for the government, or subsequent historians, may have seemed infrequent or semi-permanent was for all practical purposes permanent for a returning Irish-American soldier, where the implementation of suspensions preceded, and extended well beyond, the full duration of his stay. Vaughan also argued that, while the frequent renewal of the coercion acts may have given “the impression of continuous disorder, it might equally be seen as a sign of parliament’s optimism” that no permanent measures were put in place until the passage of the Westmeath Act in June of 1871. The lack of disorder, however, does not necessarily equate with the absence of a *perceived* threat.

It is suggested here that those acts might be viewed as revealing as much about the state of the Irish Executive’s perception of insecurity as they did about the state of the country as a whole. Unlike Ó Broin and Jenkins, who view HCSA in relatively monolithic terms, the suspension of *Habeas Corpus*, and particularly its recurring extensions, are used to track the rapidly shifting security concerns of successive Executives. The thesis demonstrates, for the first time, how the Anglo-American rapprochement of the post-bellum period had a direct impact on the implementation of what was otherwise a strictly internal matter for the Irish government. It also explores the links between legislative activity in Westminster and events on the ground in Ireland, where *Habeas Corpus* suspension was used both as a tool of counterinsurgency and as the foundation upon which other naval, military, and policing measures were built.

Chapter 2 – “Counterinsurgency off the Shelf”: Policing the Fenians

They are not mainly constables, but pervading the whole country, they are the eyes, ears and *hands* of the government on every subject. Everywhere known to evildoers and safety to those who do well. Having barracks in every village and hamlet [they are] an example of cleanliness and order.¹

Thus, Thomas Larcom, briefing the newly appointed Chief Secretary, Lord Naas, in the summer of 1866 explained how he viewed the role of the Irish Constabulary (IC). That he described them as “pervading” demonstrates the manner in which they embodied many aspects of the infrastructural power of the state. As the truism of the time went, “Who rules Ireland? Larcom and the Police.”² Much of the day-to-day management of the state indeed fell within the IC’s remit, primarily in its dealings with “evildoers”. As Elizabeth Malcolm has argued, “If, under the Union, successive British governments ruled Ireland through Dublin Castle, Dublin Castle ruled Ireland through the Irish Constabulary.”³ However, as Wodehouse argued, “The constabulary ought to be sufficient to deal with ordinary crime or to suppress local riots, but an insurrection ought to be dealt with by the military force”.⁴ This chapter sets out to interrogate the IC’s military capabilities and responsibilities, and to undertake a detailed examination of Dublin Castle’s strategic planning process that resulted in a force integral to counterinsurgency activities during the Fenian rising.

The historiography of the Fenian Rising of 1867, like the perceptions of many contemporaries, attributes the credit for the rising’s suppression to the IC, without examining how it was used as a strategic branch of military power. However, as W.E. Vaughan has argued, the rising “distracted attention from the weaknesses of the constabulary by revealing their strengths.”⁵ This chapter examines the development of the IC in the years leading up to the Fenian rising as

¹ Larcom to Chief Secretary Naas, 23 Jul., 1866. NLI, Mayo Papers MS 11,193. (My Emphasis)

² Quoted in Flanagan, ‘The Chief Secretary’s Office, 1853-1914: A Bureaucratic Enigma’, 200. Footnote 25.

³ Elizabeth Malcolm, *The Irish Policeman, 1822-1922: A Life* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006), 24.

⁴ Wodehouse to Gladstone, 12 Nov., 1865. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4036, 7-23.

⁵ Vaughan, *A New History of Ireland, Volume V*, 770.

it transitioned from a mainly military to a civil body, a process far from complete by the outbreak of the rising. It begins with a brief treatment of the trends evident in the early history of nineteenth-century Irish policing, and establishes the practices implemented in preparation for the Young Ireland Rising, which had such a lasting legacy on how Fenianism was suppressed. It continues with an examination of the force in the immediate build-up to the 1867 rising before offering a detailed examination of the plans for strategic concentration of the force in the event of an outbreak. This chapter also highlights the previously under-explored subject of Irish 'Special Constables', perceived by many as the last line of defence in isolated communities. As this chapter is primarily concerned with the role of the 'visible' state, the intelligence-gathering functions of the Dublin Metropolitan Police will not be examined in detail. Others have already comprehensively examined both the DMP's involvement in the Fenian Rising and the wider social and political impact of the force, including the role of some of its leaders.⁶ Instead, when discussed, the DMP features with reference to its role within the attempts to centralize all policing powers in the period after 1850, though it ultimately remained an independent body until its eventual absorption into the Garda Síochána in 1925.⁷

The central proposition of this chapter is that the strategic distribution of the force during the *etat-de-siège* in 1848 and 1867 can be viewed as microcosms of the century-long tension in the centralization of power in Dublin Castle at the expense of the local magistrates. Rather than presenting an operational or tactical account of IC action during the rising – a topic already well served – this chapter

⁶ Shin-ichi Takagami, 'The Dublin Fenians 1858-79' (Ph.D, Trinity College, Dublin, 1990); Shin-ichi Takagami, 'The Fenian Rising in Dublin, March 1867', *Irish Historical Studies* 29, no. 115 (May 1995): 340–62; Shin-ichi Takagami, *The Dublin Fenians after the Rising, 1867-79*, Hosei University Ireland-Japan Papers; (Institute of Comparative Economic Studies, 1992); Anastasia Dukova, 'Crime and Policing in Dublin, Brisbane and London c.1850-1900' (PhD Thesis, Trinity College, Dublin, 2012); Gregory Allen, 'The New Police: London and Dublin - The Birth of the Dublin Metropolitan Police', *Police Journal* 50, no. 4 (1977): 304–17; Nigel Cochrane, 'The Policeman's Lot Was Not a Happy One: Duty, Discipline, Pay and Conditions in the Dublin Metropolitan Police', *Saothar* 12 (January 1987): 9–20; Jim Herlihy, *The Dublin Metropolitan Police: A Complete Alphabetical List of Officers and Men, 1836-1925* (Dublin: Four Courts Press Ltd, 2001); Donal McCracken, *Inspector Mallon: Buying Irish Patriotism for a Five-Pound Note: The Real Inspector Mallon* (Dublin ; Portland, OR: Irish Academic Press Ltd, 2009).

⁷ Eunan O'Halpin, *Defending Ireland, The Irish State and Its Enemies since 1922* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 10.

seeks to explore and assess the strategic impact that the IC had on the defence of Ireland and its interactions with other elements of the state's response. In this context, it is critical to recognize that the IC was not designed to act primarily as a military force to confront insurrection, though it often shouldered this responsibility. As its Inspector General explained in 1862, few of the constabulary's myriad functions were less essential to the "wellbeing of society" than "to prevent and deter, whether by moral or physical force, from the violation of the public peace."⁸ Complaints as to the IC's inability to universally guarantee that 'peace', widespread during the rising and its immediate aftermath, abated with the dwindling Fenian threat, further endorsing Vaughan's assessment of the IC in 1867.

Historiography and Context

As one former RIC Officer, Thomas Fennell, observed in his personal memoir, to write a complete history of the force "would be almost equivalent to writing Irish history for that period, for it was the organisation chiefly relied upon to enforce English rule in this country during those years. [It was] a perfect machine for enforcing English rule in Ireland."⁹ The historiography of Irish policing in the nineteenth century can be broadly divided into five categories: personal memoir, social and genealogical studies, studies of ordinary crime and "outrage", political policing, and the integration of the IC with the rural communities they served. Rarely, does it examine its strategic contribution to counterinsurgency or fully interrogate the ways in which it interacted with other branches of state power. The historiographical investigation undertaken here acknowledges that ideas such as 'domestication' and the study of crime and outrage contribute, to a degree, to the ability of the IC to undertake counterinsurgency activities within their communities. However, it highlights issues of distribution and militarization ahead of social issues to articulate more clearly the gaps in current understanding of the IC's counterinsurgency activities.

⁸ Henry John Brownrigg, *Observations Concerning the Constabulary Force of Ireland. Chiefly in Reference to Certain Objections Alleged against the Present System*, 1862, 15.

⁹ Thomas Fennell, *The Royal Irish Constabulary: A History and Personal Memoir*, ed. Rosemary Fennell (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2003), 3.

The RIC only slowly entered the canon of Irish historiography, except in the guise of personal memoirs of its retired officers.¹⁰ This was primarily because “it was not easy ... to acknowledge that many, perhaps even most, of its citizens accepted, worked for and even supported the ‘occupying’ power.”¹¹ This distorted the historiography which focused on less controversial socio-administrative, rather than strategic aspects of the force. As Crossman has argued, however, “the maintenance of law and order involved far more than the suppression of crime. Public confidence in the law became a measure of public confidence in British rule.”¹² Not only were ‘outrage’ statistics “presented as objective evidence of the state of the country”, but the very establishment of the IC was viewed as part of an attempt “to win Irish hearts and minds to the reality of British rule – a policy they identified as ‘Justice to Ireland’.”¹³ Detailed studies of Irish policing illustrate the IC’s increasing responsibilities, which signaled steps in the “gradual but clear evolution of the character and role of the Irish Constabulary.”¹⁴

More recently, debate has arisen over the degree to which the IC was integrated with and representative of Irish society – termed “domestication”. Given that the rank and file were prohibited from service in their counties of origin, it had been questioned whether the IC were capable of gathering actionable intelligence, rooting out the perpetrators of agrarian “outrages”, or work effectively as a detective branch. Initial investigations proposed that the IC became progressively less martial, with responsibilities “more akin to house-keeping than

¹⁰ See for example, Henry Robert Addison, *Recollections of an Irish Police Magistrate and Other Reminiscences of the South of Ireland* (London: Ward and Lock, 1862); Stephen Ball, *A Policeman’s Ireland: Recollections of Samuel Waters, R.I.C.* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1999); Robert Curtis, *The History of the Royal Irish Constabulary* (Dublin: McGlashan and Gill, 1871).

¹¹ Malcolm, *The Irish Policeman, 1822-1922*, 27.

¹² Virginia Crossman, *Politics, Law and Order in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Dublin, 1996), 1.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 4; Jay Roszman, “‘Outrage’ & ‘Justice’: Irish Agrarian Violence and British Governing Policy During The Age Of Reform, 1835-1841’ (PhD Thesis, Carnegie Mellon, 2015), 4.

¹⁴ W.J. Lowe, ‘Policing Famine Ireland’, *Eire-Ireland* 29, no. 4 (Winter 1994): 47; Lowe, W.J., ‘The Constabulary Agitation of 1882 (Royal Irish Constabulary)’, *Irish Historical Studies* 31, no. 121 (May 1998): 37–59; Kennedy, “‘The Indispensable Informer’”; Elizabeth Malcolm, ‘Investigating the “Machinery of Murder”: Irish Detectives and Agrarian Outrages, 1847-70’, *New Hibernia Review* 6, no. 3 (Winter 2002): 73–91; Elizabeth Malcolm, “‘The Reign of Terror in Carlow’: The Politics of Policing Ireland in the Late 1830s’, *Irish Historical Studies* Vol. 32, no. No. 125 (May 2000): 59–74; Mark Finnane, ‘A Decline in Violence in Ireland? Crime, Policing and Social Relations, 1860-1914’, *Crime, History & Societies* 1, no. 1 (1997): 51–70.

peace-keeping.”¹⁵ This was supported by commenting on the “greening” of the force with higher proportions of Catholic recruits.¹⁶ Subsequently, however, it was acknowledged that restrictions on Catholics within the senior officer class, “who determined the nature of the force” created a *de facto* glass ceiling being reached at the rank of County Inspector.¹⁷ To this idea of domestication might be added recent work examining the social integration of Harry Hardy’s Irish Constabulary Band, founded in 1861, or the role of the “sporting policemen” whose participation in popular sporting events throughout the country may have helped them to “play their way into the hearts of the people.”¹⁸ The relevance of this discussion to the current thesis is that it establishes a baseline against which more martial activity can be assessed.

From a transnational perspective, it is the influence of Irish policing practice throughout the British Empire that has attracted most recent attention. Whereas early works on colonial policing proposed that the London Metropolitan Police served as the model for urban policing, it was the “Irish model” that was seen as the model for rural and frontier policing.¹⁹ The emergence of ‘New Imperial History’ successfully refuted this overly simple, mono-directional flow of ideas and resources. More recent interpretations emphasised the need to avoid “sweeping generalizations” of this kind and argue that the sheer variety of geographic, political, and social contexts renders such categorizations unhelpful at

¹⁵ W.J. Lowe and E.L. Malcolm, ‘The Domestication of the Royal Irish Constabulary’, *Irish Economic and Social History* 19 (January 1991): 27.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 34-37.

¹⁷ Malcolm, *The Irish Policeman, 1822-1922*, 149-50; Fergus Campbell, ‘Policing’ in *The Irish Establishment 1879-1914* (Oxford, 2009), 100-136; It should be noted, however, that Lowe subsequently commented on Campbell’s “contrived disagreement” by noting that he had reached the same conclusion within his own later work on the Officer Corps. See, W.J. Lowe, ‘Irish Constabulary Officers, 1837-1922: Profile of a Professional Elite’, *Irish Economic and Social History* 32 (2005): 19-46. Campbell, ‘Policing’ in *The Irish Establishment 1879-1914*, 135.

¹⁸ Brian Griffin, ‘Sporting Policemen: Sports and the Police in Victorian and Edwardian Ireland’, *Éire-Ireland* 48, no. 1&2 (Spring/Summer 2013): 54; Donal O’Sullivan, *The Irish Constabularies, 1822-1922: A Century of Policing in Ireland* (Brandon, 1999), 106-7.

¹⁹ Stanley H. Palmer, *Police and Protest in England and Ireland 1780-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 711-15; Charles Jeffries, *The Colonial Police* (London: Max Parrish, 1952); David M. Anderson and David Killingray, ‘Consent, Coercion and Colonial Control: Policing the Empire, 1830-1940’, in *Policing the Empire: Government, Authority and Control, 1830-1940* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), 3.

best.²⁰ This refreshing perspective offers new light on the Irish situation whereby the consolidation of state power was not merely evident in police structures, but was inherent in the manner in which “police powers can be centralized by bringing together the coercive and judicial arms of government.”²¹ This was the tendency at times of insurrection in Ireland, where the roles of Justices of the Peace, Resident Magistrates, County Inspectors, and even army and coastguard officers were often blurred and frequently merged.

The drive toward the centralization of state power is evident from the early foundations of Irish police, which assumed this characteristic far earlier than their British counterparts.²² In Ireland growing nationalism, political unrest, and the inefficiency of the “ridiculously low” number of constables in Dublin, saw the introduction of the 1787 “Act for the Better Execution of the Law and the Preservation of the Peace within the Counties at large.”²³ Broadly based on the centralized Parisian police, the provisions of the act were “not generally carried out in the counties”, with its power rapidly decentralized after a supplementary act of 1792.²⁴ By 1796 only seven counties fielded a force of these ‘Baronial Constables’ (‘Old Barnys’) who, despite a degree of reform, were “manifestly unable to cope with riot and disorder.”²⁵ For the next fifteen years responsibility for law and order reverted to the traditional method, whereby the “growing

²⁰ Surajit Mukhopadhyay, ‘Importing Back Colonial Policing Systems? The Relationship Between the Royal Irish Constabulary, Indian Policing and Militarization of Policing in England and Wales’, *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Sciences* 11, no. 3 (1998): 254; Richard Hawkins, ‘The “Irish Model” and the Empire: A Case for Reassessment’, in *Policing the Empire: Government, Authority and Control, 1830-1940*, ed. David M. Anderson and David Killingray (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), 18–32.

²¹ Mukhopadhyay, ‘Importing Back Colonial Policing Systems? The Relationship Between the Royal Irish Constabulary, Indian Policing and Militarization of Policing in England and Wales’, 255.

²² Stanley Palmer, ‘The Irish Police Experiment: The Beginnings of Modern Police in the British Isles, 1785-95’, in *Criminal Justice History: Themes and Controversies from Pre-Independence Ireland*, ed. Ian O’Donnell and Finbarr McAuley (Dublin: Four Courts Press Ltd, 2003), 10.

²³ Palmer, 102–6. *27 Geo. III, Ch 40*.

²⁴ Curtis, *The History of the Royal Irish Constabulary*, 2; Palmer, ‘The Irish Police Experiment: The Beginnings of Modern Police in the British Isles, 1785-95’, 109. *32 Geo. III, cap. 16*. “An Act for regulating the Office of Constable, and for the better enforcing of Process of Criminal Law in certain Parts of the Kingdom.”

²⁵ Curtis, *The History of the Royal Irish Constabulary*, 3.

burden of maintaining public order fell heavily on the army”, who were supplemented by the newly established Irish militia.²⁶

The resurgence of agrarian violence in 1813-4 required this ‘Baronial’ police to be supplemented by a “more mobile force under the control of the government.”²⁷ Chief Secretary Robert Peel introduced his “Peace Preservation Act” of 1814, which aimed to partially relieve the army of its policing duties.²⁸ This resulted in two separate forces coexisting in Ireland, the Baronial and Parish (sometimes referred to as ‘county’ or ‘common’) constables, but this produced a force that was “wretchedly inadequate.”²⁹ This new ‘flying-column’ force, based in Dublin, could be quickly despatched to areas proclaimed by the Lord Lieutenant, in detachments that included a chief magistrate, a chief constable, and fifty sub-constables. It quickly became unpopular because the “cost of maintaining the force was levied on the district to which it was sent”, rather than being financed centrally.³⁰ This remained the case until an amending act in 1817 saw the exchequer bear two-thirds of the cost of the deployment of the force, resulting in “the government [gaining] increasing power.”³¹ This period saw policing aimed at curbing disturbances rather than “devising a radical or far-reaching reform of the Irish [Protestant] police system”.³² Up until this point, policing ‘reform’ might more accurately be described as *ad hoc* attempts to deal with immediate problems rather than a self-conscious attempt by the state to exert consistently broader infrastructural power. What emerges for the 1860s from an acknowledgment of these two policing strands coexisting in Ireland is that the later IC might be viewed as a somewhat awkward synthesis of the two roles within the one force.

²⁶ S.J. Connolly, ‘Union Government, 1812-23’, in *A New History of Ireland, Volume V: Ireland Under the Union, I: 1801-1870: 5*, ed. W. E. Vaughan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 59.

²⁷ McDowell, *The Irish Administration, 1801-1914*, 136.

²⁸ Tadhg Ó Ceallaigh, ‘Peel and Police Reform in Ireland, 1814-18’, *Studia Hibernica*, no. 6 (1966): 25-26.

²⁹ Ó Ceallaigh, 29-30.

³⁰ Connolly, ‘Union Government, 1812-23’, 59.

³¹ Ó Ceallaigh, ‘Peel and Police Reform in Ireland, 1814-18’, 40. 48 Statutes General, 57 Geo. iii ch 22.

³² Ó Ceallaigh, 32; John McLennan, *Memoir of Thomas Drummond, Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland 1835 to 1840* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1867), 266.

More radical and systematic reform occurred with the 1822 Constabulary Act, which envisaged “nothing less than a permanent police establishment”, and as such is frequently identified as the starting point for modern histories of the Irish Constabulary.³³ Although often erroneously attributed to Peel, the 1822 act was authored by Chief Secretary Goulburn and was designed to focus on the “regular, daily policing”, rather than on Peel’s mobile force that responded in “extraordinary circumstances.”³⁴ The initial force contained 313 chief constables and 5,008 constables, with the headquarters set as Armagh for Ulster, Ballinrobe for Connaught, Ballincollig for Munster and Philipstown for Leinster, but exempted the borough forces in Dublin, Belfast, and Londonderry.³⁵ By the end of the decade the force had risen to nearly 7,700 officers and men, but this still represented “a clumsy compromise between centralization and local autonomy”, with ten counties maintaining the detachments facilitated by the 1814 act.³⁶ This process also rejuvenated the nationwide system of Justices of the Peace, whereby approximately 600 (one sixth) of the incumbents were dismissed in an attempt to improve the efficiency of the remaining cohort.³⁷ Both the increased manpower and the increased penetration into the countryside have particular resonances for the counterinsurgency functions of the 1840s and 1860s.

The military character of the force was maintained in both its dress and armament. Constables’ armament might include saber, pistol, and a short carbine with bayonet and sixty rounds of ball cartridge – 50 per cent higher than that carried by the IC of the 1860s. This was reinforced with a preference for hiring army and militia officers, preferably veterans of Wellington’s Peninsular campaign because of “skills the soldiers had developed there in irregular guerrilla fighting.”³⁸ Where the system failed most obviously was in the inconsistencies that developed

³³ Connolly, ‘Union Government, 1812-23’, 71; O’Sullivan, *The Irish Constabularies, 1822-1922: A Century of Policing in Ireland*; Malcolm, *The Irish Policeman, 1822-1922*. The Constabulary Act 3 *Geo. 4 Ch 103*.

³⁴ Palmer, *Police and Protest in England and Ireland 1780-1850*, 240.

³⁵ O’Sullivan, *The Irish Constabularies, 1822-1922: A Century of Policing in Ireland*, 31–32; Curtis, *The History of the Royal Irish Constabulary*, 10–11. Palmer cites the figure as slightly lower (4,792 in 1824). This is partially explained that the forces in Counties Louth and Down had not been established by this point. Palmer, 249.

³⁶ McDowell, *The Irish Administration, 1801-1914*, 136–37.

³⁷ Palmer, *Police and Protest in England and Ireland 1780-1850*, 245.

³⁸ Palmer, 253.

between the provinces. It suffered from “the want of a uniform system of management”, where the “rule which suited one province did not apply to another.” This resulted in a situation where four increasingly distinct provincial police forces emerged under the same act, which continued until the “successful bungling” was replaced by a truly national, centralized system of policing.³⁹ The self-evident military character of the force, however, implies that the force maintained much of the counterinsurgency capabilities that had been fostered under Wellington.

In its repeal of all proceeding policing acts, the 1836 Constabulary Act provided a “definitive restructuring of the Irish police system”, under which both the Young Ireland and Fenian risings would be suppressed.⁴⁰ Thomas Drummond (Under Secretary 1835-40) was the driving force behind the establishment of both the Dublin Metropolitan Police (DMP) and the IC, though he relied on the groundwork provided by the previous Chief Secretary (Littleton). Upon his arrival in Ireland, he found the policing system was “in a high degree inefficient” in relation to ordinary crime, outrage, and faction fighting, though the omission of its military character suggests that this capability remained unquestioned.⁴¹ The newly formed ‘Constabulary Office’, that housed the “concentrated officials”, occupied a wing of the Lower Castle Yard and sought to alleviate many of the administrative inefficiencies Drummond had noted.⁴² This reform process resulted in a hybrid force that was “in effect an army: trained, drilled, dressed, armed and housed along military lines; but, at the same time, dispersed thinly throughout the country and charged with establishing peace and order, not with conducting war.”⁴³ Its hybridity gave the IC a character far closer to the continental policing model of the French “Gendarmerie”, but had a strategic impact that waxed and waned between times of civil unrest and peacetime.

³⁹ Curtis, *The History of the Royal Irish Constabulary*, 13–14.

⁴⁰ Jim Herlihy, *Royal Irish Constabulary: A Short History and Genealogical Guide with a Select List of Medal Awards and Casualties* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2016), 53.

⁴¹ McLennan, *Memoir of Thomas Drummond, Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland 1835 to 1840*, 265.

⁴² Herlihy, *The Royal Irish Constabulary*, 56.

⁴³ Elizabeth Malcolm, ‘From Light Infantry to Constabulary: The Military Origins of the Irish Police, 1798-1850’, *Irish Sword: Journal of the Military History Society of Ireland* 21, no. 84 (Winter 1998): 174.

Policing Young Ireland

A more detailed examination of the Irish Constabulary's preparation for, and actions against, the Young Ireland rising demonstrates the progression in the centralization of the state's infrastructural power and also serves as a suitable point of comparison and template for later action. As in the subsequent Fenian rising, it was the IC who bore the brunt of dealing with the insurrection and were first on the scene of both outbreaks. The nature of the IC's response, however, was far more carefully planned and considered than the current historiography suggests, and illustrated the degree to which Dublin Castle conceptualized the IC as a strategic national force, and not merely a local law-enforcement tool.

The influence of the IC was also evident to the Young Ireland leaders. Loosely analogous with the Fenian infiltration of the army in the 1860s, William Smith O'Brien's plans were partly based on the "false hopes that the police and troops would refuse to intervene" in any insurrection they were called upon to suppress.⁴⁴ Although reports in the early stages of the rising reached Thomas Francis Meagher that Smith O'Brien had "actually seized Cashel and that the troops and police there had surrendered their arms", these reports were quickly disproven.⁴⁵ Robert Curtis, himself a retired County Inspector when writing his early history of the force in 1871, speculated as to the strategic motivation of the rebels. He viewed them as attempting to induce the constabulary "to vacate their barracks, and take the field," potentially providing the opportunity to win even a small victory against the Crown forces.⁴⁶ This goal, however, was thwarted by the pre-established plans to quit the barracks as the insurgents had hoped, but only in order to concentrate the IC into more formidable groupings in a manner that might improve their capacity to resist attacks from the insurgents. In parallel with these strategic preparations, the allegiance of the force was to be incentivised through financial rewards, the terms of which were articulated pre-emptively. Loyal service, "zeal and valour in the suppression of tumult", Inspector-General Sir

⁴⁴ Curtis, *The History of the Royal Irish Constabulary*, 245.

⁴⁵ Gwynn, *Young Ireland and 1848*, 252.

⁴⁶ Curtis, *The History of the Royal Irish Constabulary*, 71.

Duncan McGregor K.C.B. assured his officers and men in early March 1848, “will not fail to be amply rewarded with promotion, or other substantial proofs of His Excellency’s approbation.”⁴⁷

Further steps taken by McGregor to ensure the readiness of the IC served as a template for the preparations of IGC Col. Stewart Wood in the 1860s, and as such merit particular attention. As early as March 1848, more than a month before the passage of the Treason Felony Act, McGregor issued a circular to the County Inspectors to prepare the officers and constables under their command for a potential rising.⁴⁸ The County and Sub- Inspectors were required “to adopt such precautions as will secure their barracks from surprise” and to prepare the arms and ammunition of the men to a high standard.⁴⁹ With the process of centralized control still under development, McGregor was forced to acknowledge the “particular circumstances of each county”, and that the situation required a degree of delegation of responsibility and initiative to his County Inspectors. He instructed the inspectors that they need only inform him of receipt of his circular, rather than requiring copies of planned movements or defensive preparations to be forwarded to Dublin Castle, as would be the case in 1866-7.⁵⁰

Understandably, these instructions were to be kept highly confidential, with all inspectors acting “under an injunction to secrecy”, but in a manner that was potentially detrimental to national (rather than simply local) security. This claim is based on the fact that there was no attempt to coordinate or integrate the various local proposals at a national level, as would later be the case. McGregor emphasised this compartmentalization by instructing that it was

undesirable that any indiscreet officer should know more of the County Inspector’s plans than what relates to himself. Nor, in cases where it is intended that parties should remain within their sub-districts, is it expedient that the Constables in charge of them should receive further instructions than that in the event of tumult, they are to place themselves under the orders of the neighbouring Magistrates.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Secret and Confidential Memorandum, IG Duncan McGregor, Constabulary Office, Dublin Castle, 11 March, 1848. Copy of instructions in NLI, Larcom Papers, MS 7698.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid., Article 5 and Post Script.

⁵¹ Ibid., Article 17.

It is suggested here that this degree of compartmentalization may have hindered, rather than facilitated, the suppression of a nationwide rising. In this regard the plans and process adopted by Inspector-General Wood were far more comprehensively integrated and coordinated, with Wood appearing to have recognized the potential failings of McGregor's suggested approach.

In broad terms, the "chief desideratum" of any movement or concentration of constabulary in 1848 was the "formation, in each county, of, on an average, six or seven strong-holds, to which the loyal inhabitants will probably crowd, either for organization and resistance, or for protection, until the arrival of troops."⁵² As with the later plan, a degree of cooperation with local magistrates, as well as military and constabulary pensioners was sought. Upon the outbreak of an insurrection, the government expected that all such pensioners would immediately make themselves available to the County Inspector, who might even coerce them to do so "under the penalty of losing their pensions".⁵³ Although McGregor's system was never called upon in a nationwide context, it is evident that the new IC, less than a decade in existence, was envisioned as capable of contributing to national security in a manner that was impossible under any of its antecedents, though still relying to a degree on local rather than fully centralized command.

The growing centralization of constabulary functions over the previous decades had resulted in increased tension between the administration and magistrates, who had quibbled over patronage and control of local policing. The looming threat of insurrection dictated a greater level of cooperation between Dublin Castle's representatives (County Inspectors) and the magistrates. In an effort to clarify the expectations of the government, Under Secretary Redington⁵⁴ issued a circular explaining the steps to be taken to curb the potential rebels and gather evidence to facilitate ensuing prosecutions, resulting in a primitive form of political policing and intelligence gathering. By June, Redington had instructed the Magistrates and Constabulary Office to "communicate confidentially with the

⁵² Ibid., Article 18

⁵³ Ibid., Article 14.

⁵⁴ Sir Thomas Redington (MP for Dundalk 1837-46) was the first Irish Catholic Landlord to be appointed as Under Secretary of Ireland in 1846.

officers of the constabulary force throughout the country [...] especially with the view of secretly watching the proceedings of such [Confederate] clubs.”⁵⁵ The expanded functions expected to be undertaken by Magistrates in collaboration with the Constabulary included collating lists of members and officers of clubs, oaths, drilling, arms ownership, and investigating and documenting the raising of funds for the Confederate clubs.

The importance of Redington’s instruction for greater cooperation being implemented on a nationwide scale was paramount. He explained to the magistrates that

Although the proceedings in your district may not appear to deserve that any particular importance should be attached to them, yet it is desirable that full and detailed information should be obtained with respect to them, since they may become of importance if connected with the proceedings of corresponding societies in other parts of the country.⁵⁶

In other words, where antipathy between the magistrates and government continued, the exigencies of the system required their cooperation to suppress the Young Irelanders on a national level. Redington’s instructions also suggest that the intelligence-gathering ability of the government was being coordinated in a significantly more centralized manner than the strategic movements of the constabulary in this period.

With William Smith O’Brien, John Blake Dillon, and Thomas Francis Meagher forced early into the field in their attempt to gather a force of hungry insurgents from across the south-east of the country, matters came to a head in Ballinacorney. When the Callan constabulary arrived on the scene to be met with barricades constructed near the Commons Colliery, the head of the constabulary column realized the seriousness of matters and avoided an early confrontation. Instead he sought a point of fortification, as his instructions dictated, ending up in the house of the Widow McCormack. Curtis, somewhat romantically, attributed the rapidity of the IC’s response to Ballinacorney to the fact that the “map of the country

⁵⁵ Confidential Memorandum of Redington to Inspector General of Constabulary. Dublin Castle, 16 Jun., 1848. NLI, Larcom Papers. MS 7698.

⁵⁶ Confidential Circular of Under Secretary Redington to Magistrates, 16 Jun., 1848. NLI, Larcom Papers. MS 7698.

was under their feet, not rolled up against the Grand Jury room wall, and whose knowledge of roads and distances was in their heads, and not in a memorandum book.”⁵⁷ The manner in which the engagement transpired, however, reveals as much about the nature of Constabulary Office plans and their implementation as it does the spur-of-the-moment actions of the constabulary officers involved. Both contemporary accounts like Curtis, and later evaluations such as Kinealy, seem relatively content to assume that constabulary actions relied on individual officers who “took the initiative”.⁵⁸ However, the presence of Sub-Inspector Trant and his forty-six men of all ranks, all “well-armed and disciplined”, might more accurately be ascribed to pre-conceived planning as to individual initiative.

Trant’s column was supported by the relatively meagre, but highly acclaimed “thirty-six men of the Cashel police”, a force considered sufficient to hasten the “dispersion of the rebels”.⁵⁹ Here it must be observed that in many respects the occupation, fortification, and armed defence of Widow McCormack’s house may be considered not only as a result of initiative shown by the resourceful Sub-Inspector, but were also entirely in keeping with the range of actions suggested by McGregor, particularly in articles fifteen and sixteen of his circular of 11 March 1848. The very presence of constabulary in groups of forty-six and thirty-six could have only materialized as a result of the rapid concentration of those who had been “evacuated [from] their stations in the county of Tipperary” in a manner predetermined for the constabulary at a county level.⁶⁰ Those two constabulary groupings should be viewed as examples of the “offensive combination” that the previously issued instructions required them to form in “a system of strong patrols” around the countryside.⁶¹ These “strong patrols” might be viewed as an interim phase between the flying-column approach utilized by the Peace Preservation Force earlier in the century and the primarily defensive focus of the IC of the 1860s, who were generally prepared to leave the formation of flying/moveable columns to the army.

⁵⁷ Curtis, *The History of the Royal Irish Constabulary*, 84.

⁵⁸ Kinealy, *Repeal and Revolution*, 199.

⁵⁹ Curtis, *The History of the Royal Irish Constabulary*, 83.

⁶⁰ *The Nation*, 29 Jul., 1848.

⁶¹ Secret and Confidential Memorandum, IG Duncan McGregor, Constabulary Office, Dublin Castle, 11 March, 1848. Article 18.

The issue of the discipline and military character of the Constabulary in this period, a later bone of contention to be explored below, is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that throughout the Ballingarry siege, the IC maintained a continuous fire from inside Mrs McCormack's house when threatened by the insurgents. Sub-Inspector Trant noted that they expended only 230 rounds, while retaining approximately 1,600 rounds in reserve.⁶² This tallies almost exactly with the levels of ammunition required by McGregor's March circular (40 rounds per man), which would have resulted in a total of 1,840 rounds available, just 10 more than that reported by Trant.⁶³ But while the IC's response to 1848 may not have been as systematically planned as would emerge twenty years later, it was more than adequate for the threats it then faced, subsequently being viewed as more important as a demonstration of the force's loyalty and dependability than of its military acumen. While Lord Chief Justice Blackburne's claim that the IC had "saved its country and deserved its lasting gratitude" might be viewed as excessive rhetorical flourish, it demonstrates the general perception of the IC's value and loyalty to the state, a perception that would be augmented in the 1860s.⁶⁴

While the enrolment of Special Constables (SC) in 1848 appears to have occurred at a level far below that which was undertaken in 1867, their appearance nonetheless caused significant controversy. Although a major re-evaluation has taken place of the role played by the SCs during this period in Britain, no such parallel examination has yet occurred in Ireland.⁶⁵ The first official sanctioning of enrolment seems to have stemmed from McGregor's County-Inspector circular,

⁶² Thomas Trant, *Reply to Father Fitzgerald's Pamphlet, Entitled his 'Personal Recollections of the Insurrection in Ballingarry in July, 1848.: With Remarks on Irish Constabulary, and Hints to All Officials.* (Dublin: McGlashan and Gill, 1862), 13. It is worth noting that both Fitzgerald's original pamphlet and Sub-Inspector Trant's response are to be found in the Larcom Papers (MS 7,698) suggesting his familiarity with the "Hints" that Trant suggested.

⁶³ Secret and Confidential Memorandum, IG Duncan McGregor, Constabulary Office, Dublin Castle, 11 March, 1848. Article 3.

⁶⁴ Lord Chief Justice Blackburne quoted in, Trant, *Reply to Father Fitzgerald's Pamphlet, Entitled his 'Personal Recollections of the Insurrection in Ballingarry in July, 1848.: With Remarks on Irish Constabulary, and Hints to All Officials.*, 38.

⁶⁵ R.E. Swift, 'Policing Chartism, 1839-1848: The Role of the "Specials" Reconsidered', *English Historical Review* Vol. 122, no. No. 497 (June 2007): 669-99.

though other incarnations of SCs seem to have operated contemporaneously.⁶⁶ Cork city, for example, in an attempt to solve the famine-related problem of indigence, attempted to return migrant paupers to their original homesteads using a force of SCs funded through a private subscription of £171 placed with a local Health Committee.⁶⁷ Whereas in Britain upwards of 20,000 SCs were enrolled as a response to the Chartist movement, (4,000 in Liverpool alone⁶⁸), in Ireland the Orange Order strongholds in County Down were the focal point of enrolment.⁶⁹

In Belfast, the Police Committee sought permission from the Lord Lieutenant to enrol Special Police Constables and for the local constabulary (the Bulkies) to be “immediately armed and trained to military discipline.”⁷⁰ Ardglass and Killough, for example, reported upwards of 200 SCs sworn in, and a further 80 in Killyleagh.⁷¹ Controversy quickly erupted and attained national prominence in Newry, when Newry Magistrates refused to enrol any constables with connections to the now largely defunct Repeal movement. In widely circulated and discussed correspondence, the Executive was forced to disavow the actions of the Newry Magistrates by noting that their actions were “enforced without the knowledge, sanction, or direction of the Government.”⁷² Predictably, the *Freeman's Journal* warned of the emergence of “local despotisms” under the control of the SCs. By contrast, the *Belfast Newsletter* argued that the Newry Magistrates had acted “not only in the true spirit of the constitution, but in a manner strictly consistent with their duty in reference to existing circumstances”, having earlier maintained that SCs would afford Belfast the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to resist any kind of “*coup-de-main*.”⁷³ That issues surrounding both the strategic distribution of the force and the reciprocal emergence of the need for Special Constables

⁶⁶ Confidential Memorandum of Redington to Inspector General of Constabulary. Dublin Castle, 16 Jun., 1848. Article 14.

⁶⁷ This force was proposed in June and details of the activities and subscription were published in July. See, *Irish Examiner*, 6 Jun., 21 Jul., 1848.

⁶⁸ Kinealy, *Repeal and Revolution*, 193.

⁶⁹ *Belfast Newsletter*, 28 Jul., 1848.

⁷⁰ Belfast Petty Sessions to Chief Secretary, Dublin Castle, Outrage Papers for County Antrim (1848), NAI, 26 Jul., 1848. Kinealy, *Repeal and Revolution*, 188–89.

⁷¹ *Belfast Newsletter*, 8 Aug., 1848.

⁷² *Irish Examiner*, 9 Aug., 1848.

⁷³ *Belfast Newsletter*, 25 Jul., & 8 Aug., 1848

transcended the period in question illustrates the importance of considering this new perspective.

Centralization – The Revenue and Borough Police

The Fenian rising occurred at what, up to that point, might have been considered the apogee of centralized control over the force, with power consolidated in Dublin Castle to a greater degree than at any period before 1865. This was primarily achieved by the integration of the Revenue Police and other borough police forces under the umbrella of the Irish Constabulary, all firmly commanded from Dublin Castle. This strengthened the force in both quality and numbers, but also removed potential administrative roadblocks to anti-Fenian activities. In so doing, the state's infrastructural power was exercised in an increasingly efficient manner.

The progressive centralization of state power was exemplified in the manner in which the Revenue Police and its responsibilities were subsumed into the nationwide IC. This occurred in a way that would go on to influence the composition and effectiveness of the IC in the 1860s. Originally formed as a result of “private enterprise” at the turn of the century, its role was formalized in 1832, with jurisdictional responsibility for the enforcement of excise laws and the prevention of illicit distillation.⁷⁴ In the early part of the century, the army had become increasingly reluctant to supply small detachments for this purpose as it was considered bad for discipline, but it soon became evident that it was not the availability of state forces, but rather the failure of those forces to act that was problematic. An 1834 report, for example, noted that,

The coastguard have got one station, the revenue police another station, and the constabulary a third, almost together, and none but the revenue police will take cognizance of illicit distillation, although all are equally cognizant of it.⁷⁵

The codification of the *General Orders for the Guidance of the Troops in Affording Aid to the Civil Power in Ireland and to the Revenue Department in Ireland* (1847) by

⁷⁴ McDowell, *The Irish Administration, 1801-1914*, 137.

⁷⁵ *Excise Inquiry, Seventh Report, pt. i* (1834), 376. Quoted in Norma Dawson, ‘Illicit Distillation and the Revenue Police in Ireland in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries’, *The Irish Jurist (New Series)* 12 (1977): 290.

the Commander of the [army] Forces in Ireland, acknowledged the necessity to coordinate action. To this end, directions were enumerated in thirteen articles that differed in their application from the use of the army in the performance of other civil duties such as “employment of the military on services, which from their nature, ought to be performed solely by the civil force”.⁷⁶ Given the confused and overlapping jurisdictions it is unsurprising that the Revenue Police were an early target for the centralization.

From 1833 the command of the Revenue Police rested with Colonel Brereton, an artillery veteran from the Peninsula War, until another Royal Artillery officer, Major General Alexander Maclachlan, succeeded him in 1846.⁷⁷ Though neither had expertise in excise collection duties, they transformed the force from one “without discipline and without instruction of any kind” into a group who were “drilled as a light infantry corps”, a function that was well suited to still-hunting.⁷⁸ This was in part achieved through the dismissal of two-thirds of the force and the establishment of a depot in Clonliffe, Dublin. As a model for inter-service co-operation it is worth noting that when Brereton discovered that many of the strongholds of illicit distillation were on the western islands, he gained the support of the Treasury for the deployment of a steamer to better execute his duty. The steamer *Warrior* was stationed at Rathmullen, Co. Donegal to facilitate the inspection of the western islands.⁷⁹

The force’s infrastructural reach was extremely inconsistent. Dawson notes that counties Donegal and Derry occupied a third of the force at times, but that other counties had “no Revenue Police at all.” The organization was strengthened by requiring each party to undertake patrols of at least 200 miles per week, but even this failed to serve as more than a temporary sop to the problem of illicit

⁷⁶ Lieutenant General Blakeney Commanding the Forces and Deputy Adjutant-General Thos. E. Napier, ‘General Orders for the Guidance of the Troops in Affording Aid to the Civil Power in Ireland’ (Alexander Thom and Co., 1847), 22. For instructions regarding the Revenue service see pages 43-50.

⁷⁷ George Taylor, *The General Letters and Orders Issued by the Honourable Board of Excise in the Year 1846*. (London: Bradbury and Evans, 1846), 15.

⁷⁸ McDowell, *The Irish Administration, 1801-1914*, 137-39.

⁷⁹ Herlihy, *The Royal Irish Constabulary*, 46.

distillation.⁸⁰ Initially distributed in two separate districts, headquartered in Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh (Northern District) and Ballinasloe, Co. Galway (Southern District), this preliminary decentralization was removed when in 1845 when, “both districts were amalgamated into one cohesive force and the administrative headquarters were transferred to the Custom House, Dublin.”⁸¹ The resulting eighteen ‘districts’, each comprising four stations, contained an average of ten to fifteen constables under the command of a Revenue lieutenant, meaning that each station was stronger than the corresponding IC barracks that might house as few as half a dozen men. At its peak under Col. Brereton, the Revenue police numbered approximately 1,100. Their abolition in 1857 meant that officers and men who had a higher degree of military training were merged with the increasingly civil force, which re-introduced aspects of the IC’s military disposition.

Table 2.1. Manpower of the Irish Revenue Police at its Abolition (1857)

Rank	Number of Men
Inspectors	10
Sub-Inspectors	10
Lieutenants	58
1 st Class Sub-Officer	10
2 nd Class Sub-Officer	10
Sergeants	62
Privates	919
Total	1,079

Source: Minute on the Abolition of the Revenue Police. Bodl. Kim. MS Eng C. 4061.

This amalgamation resulted in 20 officers and approximately 400 of the rank and file entering the Constabulary force. This was implemented to enable the IC to better discharge its newly adopted revenue duties. In a minute to Wodehouse, it was explained that by the mid-1860s those men were now “in all respects the same as the rest of the force”, suggesting that the absorption of the manpower was relatively smooth.⁸²

⁸⁰ Dawson, ‘Illicit Distillation and the Revenue Police in Ireland in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries’, 292.

⁸¹ Herlihy, *The Royal Irish Constabulary*, 46.

⁸² Minute on the Abolition of the Revenue Police. Bodl. Kim. MS Eng C. 4061.

The result of this amalgamation was to reduce the number of attacks on those now charged with revenue collection, an outcome achieved at a marked saving to the exchequer. As IGC Brownrigg noted,

The Revenue Police never proceeded on duty in parties of less than twelve or fourteen men, and yet, though armed, they were sometimes assailed. But this very fact demonstrates the superior moral weight of the Constabulary over the old Revenue Police, since, proceeding in parties not half so large upon the self-same duty, and discharging it far more effectually.

Only two incidences were recorded in which IC officers and men were “assailed” in the performance of these excise duties in the period between 1857 and 1864.⁸³ In explaining the financial benefits of the centralization, Under Secretary Larcom informed Chief Secretary Naas that upon their amalgamation “£30,000 a year was saved at once in the establishment alone and the reports of the commissioners of Inland Revenue bear testimony year by year to the efficient performance of the duty and the success which has attended it.”⁸⁴ Not only, therefore, did the centralization of the functions produce a more efficient and cost effective method of revenue collection, but it added significantly to the prestige of the constabulary and strengthened their role as agents of government, therefore facilitating the continued growth of the state’s infrastructural power.

Another sign of progressive centralization of Irish policing was the abolition of the Belfast borough police - the ‘Bulkies’. As a result of an 1864 *Commission of Enquiry* into continued rioting and sectarian violence in Belfast, the Bulkies were deemed unsuitable to continue as a local police force. On 1 September 1865, 450 of the denominationally mixed IC replaced the borough force. Of the 113 former Bulkies that presented themselves to Col. Hilliers (Deputy Inspector General) for consideration to join the IC, only 24 (21 per cent) were approved to join the ranks of the IC. The reasons behind such a low rate of success is illustrative of the perceived disparity of calibre between local and centralized police, with 40 considered “physically unfit”, 32 “physically fit, but deficient in reading and

⁸³ John Henry Brownrigg, *Examination of Some Recent Allegations Concerning the Constabulary Force of Ireland, In a Report to His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant* (Dublin: Alexander Thom and Co., 1864), 22.

⁸⁴ Larcom to Chief Secretary Naas, 23 Jul., 1866. NLI, Mayo Papers MS 11,193.

writing”, and a further 17 “declined further examination”.⁸⁵ The IC were viewed abusively in the Belfast papers as “Papists”, “a parcel of Ribbonmen” and outright “Fenians”. Even by October 1866 the *Belfast Newsletter* still viewed the IC as “papishes from Tipperary, and that they had come down to Belfast to trample over the Protestants”.⁸⁶ This antipathy began to diminish in the 1870s, and Brian Griffin argues that by then the “R.I.C. had proved itself both an efficient crime fighting force and one that was more capable of suppressing serious disorder than the municipal force had been.”⁸⁷ The degree to which this opinion was shaped by the IC’s role in suppressing Fenianism is, thus far, unclear.

The clear expansion of the state’s infrastructural power was not limited to the absorption of the Belfast police, though it must be conceded that this was not always achieved as a direct result of a specific government policy. A perfect example of this was the short-lived attempt to augment the force in Dundalk with a locally funded night watch. This consisted of a Head Constable and fourteen men, but was an experiment that lasted only a year and a half, not “upon any ground of dissatisfaction with the men”, but rather due to the additional costs to be shouldered by the Corporation’s rate payers.⁸⁸ A similar request in 1863 from the Corporation of Coleraine failed even to get the force established, “not because any difficulty whatever was thrown in the way by the Constabulary system, but simply because the Corporation was unwilling, for fiscal reasons, to appoint a sufficient number of men.”⁸⁹ By 1865 the only significant remaining borough police outside Dublin was the small force in Derry/Londonderry (the “Bang Beggars”), whose total full-time personnel never exceeded thirty-eight for all ranks.⁹⁰ The tiny borough police in Galway and Limerick were always supplemented and supported by detachments of the IC whose duties within the cities were “limited to assisting

⁸⁵ Col. Wood (IG) to Wodehouse, 1 Jul., 1865. Bodl. Kim. MS Eng C 4028, 12-14.

⁸⁶ *Belfast Newsletter*, 17 Oct. 1866. Quoted in Griffin, *Bulkies*, 139.

⁸⁷ Brian Griffin, *The Bulkies: Police and Crime in Belfast, 1800-1865* (Dublin, 1997), 140.

⁸⁸ Brownrigg, *Examination of Some Recent Allegations*, 98.

⁸⁹ Brownrigg, 99.

⁹⁰ Mark Radford, ‘The Bang Beggars of Derry City: Borough Policing in Londonderry, c.1832–70’, *Irish Studies Review* Vol. 17, no. 3 (August 2009): 349. The force was officially disbanded in 1870 as a result the report of the *Londonderry Riots Inquiry Commission* into the sectarian rioting in the town.

in public order situations”, more akin to English Special Constables than an independent local force.⁹¹

The most obvious anomaly in this process was the continued existence of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, though even the abolition/amalgamation of this force was considered in the mid 1860s. As late as June 1866, Wodehouse proposed an official “minute recommending it on the official papers.”⁹² The practical difficulties that inhibited the absorption of the DMP into the IC were too great, however, particularly at a time when they had “too much on [their] hands” in dealing with Fenianism. Both Wodehouse and Chief Secretary Chichester-Fortescue concluded that the short-term practical impediments outweighed the medium and long-term benefits, particularly the impact that such a move might have on enlistment into the DMP, and the fact that it would be “neither fair nor politic” to drive its commander into retirement.⁹³ The interim step of unifying the administrative components of the two forces under one administrative department was thought equally unwise, demonstrating some of the limits on the centralization process, and thus the state’s infrastructural power, at this time.⁹⁴

1864 – The State of the Force

The portrait of the constabulary presented by its commanding officers was of a force that was becoming progressively better suited to the provision of civil policing in Ireland. Citing the testimony of a senior “first-rate officer” from the English Metropolitan police, IGC Brownrigg asserted that, “in its adaptation to the country, the Irish Constabulary system could not be improved upon.”⁹⁵ Any alteration to the force, he argued, was dependent on the pace of social change within the country. Before the force could be disarmed and dispersed within the local population, as in England, to provide truly civil policing, “there are serious

⁹¹ Radford, 350; Chris O’Mahony, ‘Limerick Night Watch 1807-1853’, *The Old Limerick Journal* Vol. 21 (Autumn 1978): 12. The small Limerick Night Watch continued piecemeal until 1923 with approximately a dozen members. It appears that the “Bunkey” police barracks was attacked and almost set fire to during the 1867 rising, but the arson attack failed – Edward Gonne Bell RM Castleconnel, Co. Limerick to Larcom, 11 Mar., 1867. NAI CSORP 1867. Box 1732, 4087.

⁹² Wodehouse to Chief Secretary Chichester-Fortescue, 12 Jun., 1865. Bodl. Kim. MS Eng C 4048, 90.

⁹³ Wodehouse to Chichester-Fortescue, 12 Jun., 1866. Bodl. Kim. MS Eng C 4048, 94.

⁹⁴ Chichester-Fortescue to Wodehouse, 14 Jun., 1866. Bodl. Kim. MS Eng C 4048, 111-15.

⁹⁵ Brownrigg, *Examination of Some Recent Allegations*, 26.

social problems to be solved; and a new state of things must not only be inaugurated, but fairly established, before it will be safe to tamper with an institution ... adapted to the existing state of the country, and whose value no person of whatever rank or class seem disposed to deny.”⁹⁶ In other words, the possibility of de-militarizing the IC was dependent on the state of the country it was designed to serve, rather than on a specific national policy.

In the post-Crimean period, a number of criticisms were consistently levelled at the IC that had a significant bearing on the process of reform that immediately preceded the Fenian rising. An examination of these criticisms, and the reaction of the IC’s command to those criticisms, establishes a suitable baseline against which counter-Fenian operations can be assessed. IG Brownrigg was a vocal defender of the force under his command. His original defence, published in the form of a 40-page pamphlet in 1862 was expanded in 1864 to provide a more full-throated rebuttal to the force’s critics.⁹⁷ He refuted the mounting criticisms that centred around six distinct issues: centralization, military organization, selection of officers, inefficiency in the detection of offenders, costliness, and the widespread condemnation by public functionaries.⁹⁸ This section will examine the first three of these categories in detail to contextualize the reforms that followed.

The issue most relevant both to counterinsurgency capabilities and to infrastructural power was the military character of the force, but it was to the charge of over-centralization that Brownrigg first turned. In doing so, he demonstrated a clear understanding of the historical context within which police had been established and the nature of its evolution. He went as far as to cite the 1787 act as a source of justification for the structure and ethos of the force.⁹⁹ To address the concerns of the local magistracy who felt disenfranchised by the reduction of their control over the appointment of their local police he argued that, “the most unreserved confidence should subsist between the local Justices and the members of the Constabulary Force.” He demonstrated that a suitable

⁹⁶ Brownrigg, 26–27.

⁹⁷ Brownrigg, *Observations Concerning the Constabulary*; Brownrigg, *Examination of Some Recent Allegations*.

⁹⁸ Brownrigg, *Examination of Some Recent Allegations*.

⁹⁹ Brownrigg, 8.

intermediary was already in place, in the person of the County Inspector, whose responsibility it was to liaise with the local magistracy and “to make the Justices intimately acquainted with every occurrence in their several districts that can affect the public peace.”¹⁰⁰

Brownrigg’s repudiation of the military nature of the force was emphatic and repeated. With a flourish of rhetoric, he rounded on his critics by asking, “what is meant by the force being ‘too military?’ – too military for what, and in what respects too military?”¹⁰¹ Citing and collating numerous previous reports to the Executive, he demonstrated the distinguishing qualities of the IC. Its importance requires it to be quoted at length here.

In fact, this notion of the military character of the Force is a pure fancy, which, having got abroad, is communicated from one quarter to another, apparently without much consideration. A military force is under martial law; does military duty; always acts as a mass; being continually on the move, one may say all over the world, has little in common with the people, from whom the men live apart. How different from all this is the case of the Constabulary? The extreme punishment is dismissal; any man can demand his release at a month’s notice; the duties are purely and exclusively civil; the men act as individuals; are comparatively seldom seen except in twos and threes; and are not unimportant members of the civil community in the little locality which forms their sub-districts. In short, the two bodies [Army and Constabulary] are and must be totally and essentially diverse from each other, and they never can possibly assimilate.¹⁰²

This persuasive argument, however, was occasionally qualified to the point of being self-contradictory. In his discussion of the abolition of the Revenue Police he conceded that even if the constabulary now had a more military quality, that such a quality would not be an “unmitigated evil”. On the contrary, he argued for the salutary quality that such a situation would produce by asking, “Is it nothing to have visible proof that the Constabulary can, upon occasion, assemble in strength, and oppose the concentrated form of a disciplined armed body to the movements of an ill-organized rabble?”¹⁰³ This apparent contradiction was resolved in a manner familiar to the argument surrounding *Habeas Corpus* suspension, whereby Brownrigg implicitly differentiated between ordinary law and the

¹⁰⁰ Brownrigg, 15.

¹⁰¹ Brownrigg, 20.

¹⁰² Brownrigg, 27.

¹⁰³ Brownrigg, 23.

exception at a time of insurrection. The competing characteristics of the constabulary had, he felt, been balanced “without impairing its usefulness in the administration of justice” while also assuring that the government had “conferred upon it a military capacity, fitting it to meet any sudden emergency in a more extended sphere, if the safety of the state shall be endangered.”¹⁰⁴ Brownrigg’s portrayal of the force might be better understood, therefore, as describing the counterinsurgency force at his disposal at time of need, which otherwise lay dormant.

The remaining criticisms focused on the mechanics of administration. These centred on efficiency, the method of promotion of officers, and costliness. All of these issues were countered by Brownrigg with a meticulously detailed examination of the real cost to the exchequer that involved offsetting the gross cost in the annual estimates against the real saving accrued through the additional duties undertaken by the constables. The “real” cost to the exchequer, when compared against their British counterparts was £35 9s 6d per man in Ireland compared with £58 14s 1d per man in Britain.¹⁰⁵ Not only did Brownrigg successfully demonstrate the dramatic increasing infrastructural power wielded by the IC, but also the frugality with which this extension of power was achieved.

Table 2.2. Additional Duties Undertaken by the IC up to 1864.

1. They annually take the Agricultural Statistics
2. The census, decennially
3. Serve and Collect Notices and Polling papers for the Election of Poor Law Guardians
4. Collect useful Returns, when required by Government
5. Escort Prisoners and Convicts (a duty formerly performed at a higher cost, by the Military)
6. Enforce various new Acts of parliament e.g.-
 - a. Fishery laws
 - b. Spirits acts
 - c. Vagrant Act
 - d. Towns improvement
7. Execute Loan Fund Warrants
8. Exercise supervision over convicts on Tickets-of-Leave, and report such as come to, or leave, their respective districts
9. Act as Billet Masters

¹⁰⁴ Brownrigg, 33.

¹⁰⁵ Brownrigg, 75.

10. Act as Inspectors of Weights and Measures
11. Act as Inspectors (in some places) under Common Lodging House Act
12. Act in aid of Inspectors of Factories
13. Act as Auctioneers, when necessary, for the sale of distress
14. Check, in certain cases, the accounts of Governors of Gaols and Bridewells, for the maintenance of prisoners
15. Render useful information in connexion with the Emigration laws
16. Are now, by law, Customs Officers for the prevention of Smuggling
17. And Revenue Officers for the prevention of Illicit Distillation
18. And they execute Warrants for small Debts under a recent Act of Parliament

Source: Brownrigg, Examination of Some Recent Allegations, 74-77

Not only was the current system one “that inculcates implicit, willing, and respectful obedience to all the lawful orders of the Magistracy”, it did so as “an organization at once loyal, constitutional, and popular” amongst the general public. Similarly, its counterinsurgency credentials had been well established in 1848. At a time when “when the cry of ‘too military’ was hushed, [it] assisted greatly in crushing an incipient outbreak and bringing its leaders to justice.”¹⁰⁶ Not only did Brownrigg’s refutation of the charges aim to arrest the “disheartening effect” of the continual criticisms of the force, but also served as a springboard from which Wodehouse would undertake a concerted and largely successful attempt to improve the real wages and promotion conditions of the rank and file of the constabulary in preparation for the anticipated Fenian rising.

Recruitment and Reform

Writing to Gladstone towards the end of 1865, Wodehouse confessed that, “I have long been watching with anxiety the large and increasing number of resignations in the Constabulary and the symptoms of growing dissatisfaction.” After a short period of service in the IC the constables

find it more profitable to enter the Police force in London or other parts of England, or go to the Colonies. The pay must be admitted to be low, when we consider the undoubted rise in prices in this country, and the simultaneous rise of wages.¹⁰⁷

Heavily influenced by publications and reports from previous Inspectors General, particularly Browning and Colonel Wood’s most recent memorandum from June

¹⁰⁶ Brownrigg, 109.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

1865, Wodehouse noted that the pace of resignations had continued to increase in the period up to the end of the previous month, and now stood at 579, (a rate of almost 700 a year). In other words, the resignations had returned to the previous peak level in 1853/4 prior to the introduction of “long service pay” at which point there were 775 and 749 resignations respectively.¹⁰⁸ By the summer of 1865 the strength of the rank and file (both county constables and the reserves) amounted to 11,358.

Table 2.3. Composition of the Irish Constabulary, Summer 1865

Head Constables	353
Constables	1,967
Acting Constables	441
Sub-Constables	8,595
Total	11,358

Source: Wodehouse to Gladstone, 12 Nov., 1865. Bodl. Kim. MS Eng C 4036, 7-23

The 1,560 vacancies (1,235 counties and 325 reserve) amounted to 13 per cent of the force. By January 1866 the government reported the number of vacancies having risen to 1,860 (16.4 per cent).¹⁰⁹ In terms of raw manpower this was equivalent to approximately three army regiments, but there was also concern as to the drop in the overall standards of the recruits. The resignation of experienced constables was being “filled by a very inferior description of recruit” as a result of the current pay and allowances available.¹¹⁰

The report of the *Constabulary Commission of Inquiry and Augmentation of Pay* (1866) noted that it was, “the inadequacy of pay [that] is almost universally alleged to be the reason equally of resignation and of the falling off in the supply of recruits”, though other considerations were also in play.¹¹¹ The case of James O’Brien (arrested under HCSA) indicates one possible counterinsurgency consideration. O’Brien, who had served in the Constabulary at Mallow, resigned in August 1865 with the abstract of his case noting that “Superintendent [Ryan] has no doubt but he resigned for Fenian purposes, and this opinion is strengthened by

¹⁰⁸ Wodehouse to Gladstone, 12 Nov., 1865. Bodl. Kim. MS Eng C 4036, 7-23.

¹⁰⁹ Wodehouse to Grey, 21 Jan., 1866. Bodl. Kim. MS Eng C 4041, 63-70.

¹¹⁰ *Irish Times*, 13 Feb., 1866. Cited in NLI, Larcom Papers, MS 7619, “Constabulary” Commission of Inquiry and Augmentation of Pay, 1866.

¹¹¹ “Report of the Constabulary Commission”, 9. NLI, Mayo Papers, 43.869/5.

the company that prisoner kept.”¹¹² This suggests that rather than continue as a disgruntled policeman it may have been considered more honourable to resign rather than act against one’s current colleagues, an interesting contrast to the Fenian attempts to infiltrate other branches of state power, particularly the army. Although a more detailed discussion of the *Constabulary Commission* is beyond the scope of the current inquiry, it took place within the context of Wodehouse’s assertion that, “In short, I cannot conceive anything of more importance for the security of the Government here than that we should maintain, unimpaired, the loyalty and efficiency of this force,” demonstrating how seemingly mundane administrative aspects of the force’s operations would directly impact its soon-to-be-tested counterinsurgency capabilities.¹¹³

Wodehouse expanded upon the purely financial implications of the resignations, and referred to the growing spectre of Fenianism in its transnational form. As Wood had explained and reiterated numerous times, the number of resignations

must be expected yet more to increase at the close of the American [Civil] War, it will be clearly seen to be a matter of serious moment, at a time when the country people are in a disaffected state, and when a dangerous, and rapidly extending, and well organized society not only pervades the population, but is using every exertion to extend its influence even amongst those bodies that are looked upon as Her Majesty’s most loyal Subject.¹¹⁴

The implication here is that addressing the issue of pay was the surest way to shore up the loyalty of the force. Overall, despite earlier fears of Fenian infiltration of the constabulary, as in 1848, Wodehouse felt that their “fidelity to the government is marvellous”, despite the fact that it was “entirely Irish and with a large and increasing majority of Roman Catholics.”¹¹⁵

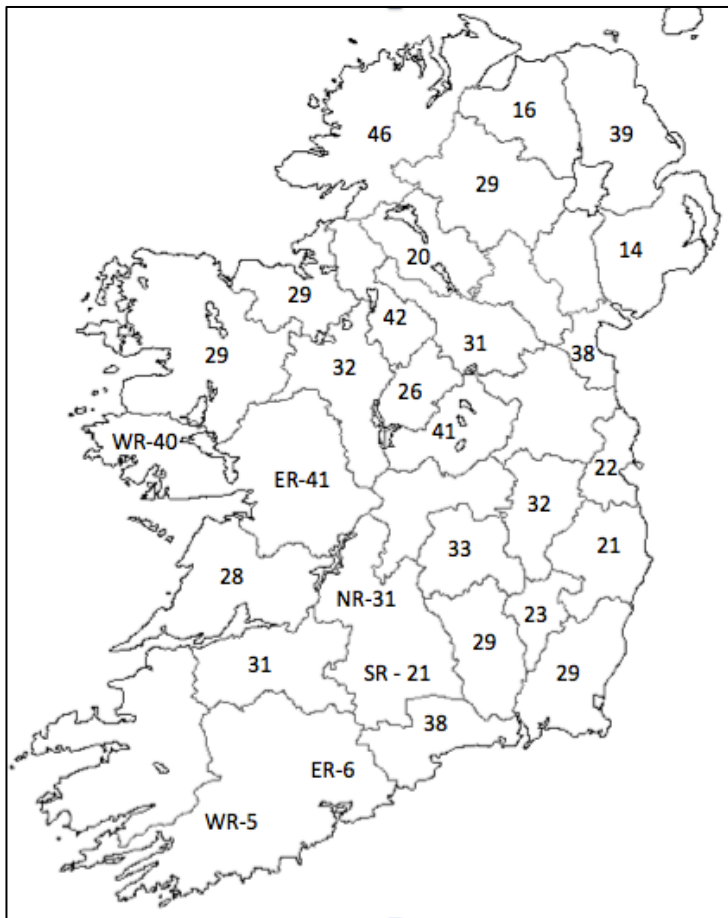
¹¹² Abstract of the case of James O’Brien, 25 Aug., 1866. CSORP 1867, Box 1732, 16006.

¹¹³ Wodehouse to Gladstone, 12 Nov., 1865. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4036, 7-23.

¹¹⁴ Copy of Report of Col. Wood to Wodehouse, 8 Jun., 1865 (Enclosure). Bodl. Kim. MS Eng C 4061.

¹¹⁵ Wodehouse to Gladstone, 12 Nov., 1865. Bodl. Kim. MS Eng C 4036, 7-23.

Map 2.1. Shortfall between current and normal levels of Irish Constabulary due to resignation (where available).



Source: Col. Wood to Chief Secretary Naas, 22 Dec 1866. NAI, CSORP 1866. Box 1720, 23,385. (Data not available for all counties)

Even small variations in sub-districts being under-strength was viewed as potentially disastrous in the event of a rising. In Kerry, for example, one isolated mine became the focal point for police protection in the immediate build up to the rising. The concerns of the JP of Castletown Berehaven reflect the rural situation as a whole. In late December 1866 he wrote to the government both in praise of, and in concern as to the future of the IC, writing,

It affords me much gratification to bear testimony to the efficiency and reliable character of the constabulary, we have only to regret the smallness of their number, which is below the standard allowed. If at all practicable it would be most desirable to augment the number especially at the "Allihies" station in the vicinity of the mines where there is of necessity a magazine containing several tons of powder, a vast amount of machinery, and other valuable property, which would become an easy prey in the event of an *emeute*.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ Enclosure in Naas to IGC Col. Wood. 21 Dec. 1866. NAI, CSORP 1866. Box 1720, 22,980.

Wood replied that he was besieged by requests for men from all quarters and that he was trying to manage the shortfall by directing the available men to the areas where the greatest threat of insurrection was evident. He noted that, having emptied the depot of every available man, "I have endeavoured to complete the southern and some of the South Western Counties with the exception of the east riding of Cork that has but six vacancies. West Cork is better off than any other county or riding".¹¹⁷

During the 1860s the manner in which all types of promotion were managed was of paramount importance, particularly in the aftermath of Brownrigg's retirement, which created a series of vacancies to be filled in the chain of command. Wodehouse decided that the post of Deputy Inspector General should be given to Major Thomas Esmonde VC, ahead of Col. Hilliers because he (Esmonde) belonged to a loyal Roman Catholic family that had "been steady supporters of the Government in spite of priestly intimidation."¹¹⁸ Esmonde had impeccable military credentials, having been awarded a Victoria Cross in 1855 while serving with the 18th Regiment of Foot (later the 'Royal Irish' regiment) in the Crimea. Even in the act of writing to Major Esmonde to inform him of his promotion, however, the glass ceiling was immediately put in place when Wodehouse felt it important to inform him that,

In order to prevent any possible misunderstanding hereafter, I think it right to add that although in the present instance the Deputy Inspector General has been promoted to the command of the Constabulary force, the government must reserve to itself entire liberty as to the appointment of the Chief Command, and it must not be considered that the Deputy Inspector General has an indefeasible claim in virtue of his office to be promoted in the event of a vacancy.¹¹⁹

As such, Wodehouse might be accused of a degree of tokenism, gaining political capital by appointing a prominent Roman Catholic to senior office in the first four months of his tenure as Lord Lieutenant, while also ensuring that he could rise no further. This was born out with Col. George Hillier eventually being promoted to

¹¹⁷ Col. Wood to Naas, 22 Dec 1866. NAI, CSORP 1866. Box 1720, 23,385.

¹¹⁸ Wodehouse to Peel, 16 Mar., 1865. Bodl. Kim. MS Eng C 4021, 9-14.

¹¹⁹ Wodehouse to Esmonde, 20 Mar., 1865. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4021, 102-3.

the Inspector Generalship in 1876, a post he held throughout the Land War.¹²⁰ However, Esmonde's early death as a result of a hunting accident in 1873, before Hillier's promotion, meant that the authenticity of this early 'greening' of the senior officers of the RIC was never tested.¹²¹

More broadly, Chief Secretary Peel confirmed this general policy by noting that, "if the force becomes to a prepondering [sic] degree R.C., Fenianism and so called nationalism may undermine its discipline and already the number of Protestants entering the Constabulary is in a decreasing ration," noting that of the 250 applicants for cadetships in 1865, only twenty or so were Protestants.¹²² Within the DMP, Peel felt that Colonel Lake "acts as a check" within the management, a factor that Esmonde was "unlikely to be independent of."¹²³ It is clear, therefore, that from a counterinsurgency perspective, the religious make-up of both the mid-level and senior officers was considered by contemporaries to have a direct bearing on the discipline, efficiency, and loyalty on the force as a whole.

Strategic Concentration

Within the existing historiography, the engagement on Tallaght Hill highlights many of the same problems as the IC's involvement in Ballingarry. Robert Kee has argued that one "curious feature" of the 1867 rising was the "relative state of unpreparedness of the police", an argument that is supported by his description of the quick surrender of the IC barracks at Stepside and Glencullen. The decision of Peter Lennon to avoid Bray because it was "too strong", however, does little to alter Kee's opinion, nor does the fact that Sub-Inspector Burke's column of fourteen armed constables was already in place to meet the Fenians hoping to gather on Tallaght Hill on the night of the 5-6 March 1867.¹²⁴ Having faced down a volley of 50 shots unscathed, Burke's men dispersed two separate groups of

¹²⁰ Crossman, *Politics, Law and Order in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, 198. Appendix E "Inspectors-General of the Constabulary, 1836-1922."

¹²¹ Michael Brophy, *Sketches of the Royal Irish Constabulary* (London: Burns and Oates, 1886), 18.

¹²² Peel to Wodehouse, 19 Mar., 1865. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4021, 85-89.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Kee, *The Green Flag, Volume II - The Bold Fenian Men*, 39.

Fenians (killing one), and caused an effect on the Fenians that Kee himself has described as “devastating”.¹²⁵ It seems more appropriate, therefore, to categorize the IC’s reaction to the rising as inconsistent, varying by location rather than suffering from universal “unpreparedness”. It is suggested here that the manner in which the IC was designed to contract strategically at the outbreak of the rising accounts, in part, for this disparity.

The method by which the army was distributed across the country has received some attention within Fenian historiography, but little attention has been paid to the planned movements and distribution of the IC who, it was intended, could be withdrawn from isolated rural stations and concentrated in larger towns. The only point, for example, where Ó Broin mentions a strategic concentration is in relation to Tipperary, but the phenomenon was far more widespread than has been hitherto acknowledged within the literature.¹²⁶ For his part, Under Secretary Larcom seems to have been fundamentally opposed to the idea of constabulary concentration. Writing to Naas on the immediate outbreak of the rising, he bemoaned what he perceived to be the selfishness and faulty logic of the landlords who called for constabulary protection of their homes by noting that “no one thinks of the safety of the places from which the stations are to be withdrawn!”¹²⁷

As noted, the IC was described as the “eyes, ears and hands” of the government. While this description was certainly true during peacetime, the proposed manner of their concentration at time of threatened insurrection indicates that the IC was not always intended to maintain this high level of infrastructural reach into the Irish countryside. The IC was distributed, as has been seen, in numerous barracks spread throughout rural Ireland, often in very small detachments and in positions of relative vulnerability. By 1867, the force contained 11,000 men in 1,600 barracks – an average of less than 7 men per station.¹²⁸ With the growing tension that emerged during the ‘year of action’ (1865) the new Inspector General, Col. Wood, and Wodehouse resolved to develop a plan for

¹²⁵ Kee, 40.

¹²⁶ Ó Broin, *Fenian Fever*, 147–48.

¹²⁷ Larcom to Naas, 5 Mar., 1867. NLI, Larcom papers, MS 11191/5.

¹²⁸ Herlihy, *The Royal Irish Constabulary*, 72.

dealing with any anticipated insurrection, as had been prepared in 1848.¹²⁹ General Rose was reluctant to undertake a comprehensive plan, but Col. Wood embraced the task enthusiastically. The presence of many of the documents initially drafted in 1848 in the Larcom's archival files for the years 1861-7 suggests that Larcom was actively influencing the formation of constabulary responses and was attempting to retain the successful elements of earlier practice in the current situation.¹³⁰

The first evidence of such a plan in germination emerged as early as 12 September 1865, when Wodehouse wrote to his Chief Secretary to advise him that "We are about to issue a circular to the Constabulary as to the course to be taken by them in case of an outbreak."¹³¹ The first series of formal instructions to County Inspectors did not emerge, however, until 1 January 1866.¹³² It may be that the *Irish People* arrests and the ensuing Special Commission contributed to this three-and-a-half month delay. A detailed analysis of this plan for strategic concentration reveals the growing awareness amongst both the Irish Executive and the IC's senior command of the limitations of the infrastructural reach of the government as exercised by the constabulary.

The plan was rolled out nationwide by Wood at the start of January 1866. He forwarded confidential instructions to each County Inspector, and instructed them to develop a plan tailored to the specific requirements of each locality that was explicitly designed to coordinate with all other branches of state power. Compared with the 1848 plan, the 1866 iteration required a broader consultation within the locality. Not only were plans to be developed in coordination with locally based sub-inspectors and local magistrates, but also with engagement and input from constabulary pensioners, "trustworthy civilians", "heads of departments connected with the government", and "officers commanding the troops, the staff officers of military pensions, Coast Guard &c, that may be residing

¹²⁹ For the full details of the plan Appendix A.

¹³⁰ National Library of Ireland, *Collection List No. 127 – Larcom*, Compiled by Stephen T. Ball (2007) 43-4.

¹³¹ Wodehouse to Peel, 12 Sept., 1865. Bodl. Kim. MS Eng C 4031, 112-9.

¹³² Secret and Confidential Memorandum of Inspector General John Stewart Wood, 1 Jan., 1866. NLI, Mayo Papers, MS 43,887/2. (See Appendix A)

in his county”.¹³³ In this regard, it echoed General Rose’s desire to coordinate multiple branches of state power, but it engaged more meticulously with the minutiae of strategic planning.

In general terms, many of the articles of the 1866 plan were remarkably similar to the 1848 instructions, though the overall tone of the 1866 plan was more defensively minded than its predecessor. The most significant aspect of the updated plan was for the almost immediate withdrawal from outlying stations in the event of an outbreak, thereby ceding space to the rebels while hoping to deprive them of easy (and potentially sensational) victories. The most isolated stations would contract sequentially to a pre-arranged strategic centre, where “prudence will dictate the propriety of causing the most distant parties [groups of constabulary] to move first; which falling back upon those nearer the point of concentration, will gather strength on their way, so that no very small number of men will be exposed to a long march.”¹³⁴ At the same time, the army would reciprocally assume responsibility for the areas being abandoned. In other words, while the IC was largely responsible for civil and criminal tasks, their military character was not to be overly strained in a manner that might place them in immediate jeopardy. It became a matter of pressing importance to ascertain the exact distance “of any constabulary party from its intended point of concentration”, in much the same way as it became necessary to ascertain how far Coastguard stations were from local telegraphy stations.¹³⁵ (see page 339-42, below)

The instructions were far from unilateral and recognized the “particular circumstances of each county.”¹³⁶ It relied heavily on the local knowledge of each sub- and county inspector, and offered a broad range of defensive options from which the inspectors could choose. The fifth article of the instructions, for example, suggested that in some counties, or portions of counties

¹³³ Secret and Confidential Memorandum of Inspector General John Stewart Wood, 1 Jan., 1866. NLI, Mayo Papers, MS 43,887/2. Articles 11 & 12.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, Article 7.

¹³⁵ Secret Memorandum of Inspector General John Stewart Wood. 27 January 1866. NLI, Mayo Papers, 43,887/2.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

[...] it may be desirable to leave the men at their present stations, under the order of the Magistrates, to defend their own barracks, or to assist in the defence of any house in the vicinity more capable of resistance than their own. In other cases, it may be expedient to unite two or more of the small parties together, or lastly to concentrate the men at the headquarters of their district.¹³⁷

As will be seen, despite all the planning that took place, this was often the manner in which rural constabulary barracks were eventually defended, initially at least.

The state's physical infrastructure was also central to Col. Wood's planning. A principal task of the county inspector was to locate the most secure and defensible position in each locality. In the event that the district headquarters proved unsuited to defensive requirements, the county inspector was encouraged to substitute another "more central or desirable point for the assembly of the men of the district; a station for example, in the vicinity of the troops or contiguous to a railway station," as was eventually to be the case in Killarney in February 1867.¹³⁸ In subsequent drafts of these instructions, this stipulation was expanded to include considerations of the "command of important roads, or passages of rivers etc."¹³⁹ This demonstrates a broadening of Col. Wood's understanding of the infrastructural elements of defence and suggests the possibility of expanding the requirements to include cooperation with the Royal Navy in engaging in riverine activity. In the unlikely event that the district force was denied accommodation in the "military barrack or other public building", the sub-inspector was permitted to hire any house that was well suited to such a purpose – described as being "*detached from other buildings*" and possessed of a water supply. Such a temporary base was to be "promptly improved by the zeal and intelligence of the officer", avoiding at all costs the "dispersion of the men in private lodgings."¹⁴⁰ This consideration is in line with the removal of the "half-billet" system for soldiers (discussed below) from the first half of the century, and emphasises the overriding importance of detachment size and location.

¹³⁷ Secret and Confidential Memorandum of Inspector General John Stewart Wood, 1 Jan., 1866. NLI, Mayo Papers, MS 43,887/2. Article 5.

¹³⁸ Secret and Confidential Memorandum of Inspector General John Stewart Wood, 1 Jan., 1866. NLI, Mayo Papers, MS 43,887/2. Article 8.

¹³⁹ Secret Memorandum of Inspector General John Stewart Wood. 27 Jan., 1866. NLI, Mayo Papers, 43,887/2.

¹⁴⁰ Secret and Confidential Memorandum of Inspector General John Stewart Wood, 1 Jan., 1866. NLI, Mayo Papers, MS 43,887/2. Article 16. Original Emphasis.

In light of the Brownrigg's advocacy of the IC's civil functions ahead of its military character, Col. Wood's insistence on adequate military preparation and the provision of arms and ammunition is particularly revealing. Rather than relying exclusively on local initiative, it was to be the officers of districts who were to be held responsible for ensuring adequate ammunition for the rank and file. As in 1848, this amounted to each man having "forty rounds of ball ammunition, spare caps in proportion, and a spare nipple [primer]", and supplemented with "ten rounds of spare ammunition to each man" from the Sub-Inspector.¹⁴¹ Furthermore, each county and sub-inspector was expected to complete a stocktake of the ammunition in his stores. Wood acknowledged that the "presence of a few resolute policemen, well armed and provisioned, may have the effect of inspiring the timid with confidence, and enabling the magistrates to organize resistance in particular localities." However, he was also keen to point out that "it must not be concealed that by such an arrangement, which can only be considered as defensive, the force might be exposed in numerous instances to be cut off in detail [numerous small forces defeated consecutively], and thereby be prevented from undertaking any offensive operations", or ensuring the full protection to local loyalists.¹⁴²

The plan also recognized the absolute necessity of maintaining both secrecy and adequate lines of communication. Not only were the instructions themselves to be circulated sealed "in a double cover" and treated as "strictly private", but Wood went as far as to dictate that "no copies or extracts" were to be duplicated in case of detection. It must be noted that this secrecy also appears to have contributed to the lack of specific evidence relating to local plans surviving in the archival record. Unfettered communications with other centralized forces were essential. Even in the choice of locations to which to withdraw it was important to consider that they be "at such a distance from one another that communication could be kept up between them without much difficulty."¹⁴³ Each district force was instructed that it "must preserve its communication with its contiguous posts,

¹⁴¹ Ibid., Article 3.

¹⁴² Secret and Confidential Memorandum of Inspector General John Stewart Wood, 1 Jan., 1866. NLI, Mayo Papers, MS 43,887/2. Article 8.

¹⁴³ Ibid., Article 19.

either by strong patrols or by means of trustworthy messengers.”¹⁴⁴ In the event that such communication by “mounted orderlies” to deliver messages was impossible, “trusty civilians should be employed and paid for the trouble of conveying the County Inspector’s written directions, which ought to be forwarded in duplicate to each post by separate messengers.”¹⁴⁵ The obvious need to secure lines of communication must be viewed as implicitly aimed at consolidating the state’s infrastructural power, even at the height of an on-going insurrection.

The final way in which centralized command asserted its control was over the bodies of the constables themselves, by implementing a more stringent set of personal regulations. No man, for example, was to be permitted to “sleep out of barracks”, and all were required to keep their arms and ammunition in their “sleeping apartments instead of the day room below,” in order to be prepared to act at a moment’s notice. The county inspector was also encouraged to consider the “propriety of preventing any man from proceeding on duty without his arms”, and went so far as to prohibit more than one half of the men from attending “divine worship” at any given time. The latter criteria was instigated to ensure that they could attend church or mass unarmed, while a sufficient armed force remained on standby in the locality. Any members of the constabulary who were abandoning their station during a strategic concentration were required to “carry with them all their ammunition” and dispose of that which could not be carried.¹⁴⁶

The Inspector General, therefore, was required to balance numerous, seemingly contradictory, requirements. The instructions for strategic concentration of the force would be viewed as justifying the continuing charges against the overtly military character of the force, where Wood observed that, “*too sensitive alarm* is as censurable as *apathetic confidence*.”¹⁴⁷ His officers and men were required to contribute to efforts “adopted to check or subdue any insurrectionary movement”, while maintaining a suitably civil character until the exact moment of the outbreak - an extremely difficult balancing act. The best

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., Article 9.

¹⁴⁶ Secret and Confidential Memorandum of Inspector General John Stewart Wood, 1 Jan., 1866. NLI, Mayo Papers, MS 43,887/2. Article 4.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., Article 20. Original Emphasis.

advice that he could offer his officers was to assume a defensive footing. This he conveyed by reminding them that they were to

bear in mind that the constabulary being a local force, instituted for local objects, it is of importance that they should not be withdrawn from their sub-districts, or assembled in larger bodies than may be absolutely necessary for their own safety, and consequently for the eventual security of the district to which they belong.¹⁴⁸

Not only does this contrast with the desire to form “offensive groupings” as implemented in 1848, but also illustrates the numerous considerations associated with the infrastructural power of the state. Where the 1848 plan only required acknowledgment, the 1866-7 plans were to be returned in detail to the Constabulary Office in Dublin Castle to be examined and coordinated centrally. Unfortunately, no copies of the returned plans from county inspectors have been located in archival searches, meaning that the only critical evaluation of the prospective plans came about as a result of the actions taken in the field.

The earliest example of the implementation of this plan was in Kerry during the abortive February rising. The district was home to a nominal constabulary strength of 272 men, but because of vacancies, numbered just over 200 at the time of the rising. The Kerry county inspector, Thomas Smith, noted critically that those men were “in widely-dispersed stations, some of which consisted of only three men. They could hardly protect themselves, let alone protect the well-disposed who might be threatened by any sudden emergency”, indicating the clear necessity for additional troops.¹⁴⁹ Wood’s insistence on frequent communication was implemented with clear success, though it resulted in one of the few constabulary casualties of the rising, Constable William Duggan. Duggan had proceeded on horseback to deliver intelligence of Fenian movements from Killarney to Glenbeigh barracks, and on to Caherciveen. This allowed sufficient time for the Caherciveen barracks to be put in a suitable state of defence, as had been envisioned by the memorandum.

¹⁴⁸ Secret and Confidential Memorandum of Inspector General John Stewart Wood, 1 Jan., 1866. NLI, Mayo Papers, MS 43,887/2. Article 6.

¹⁴⁹ Memorandum of County Inspector, Thomas Smith. NAI, CSORP 1866, 562. Quoted in Ó Lúing, ‘Aspects of the Fenian Rising in Kerry, 1867, I’, *Journal of the Kerry Archaeological and Historical Society* 3 (1970): 137.

When the Kerry Fenians arrived at Caherciveen barracks with the intention of undertaking an easy arms raid, they found it “alerted and under defence”, enough at least to persuade the Fenians to abandon the proposed attack.¹⁵⁰ Peter Fitzgerald, the Knight of Kerry, noted that the two and a half hours notice provided to the constabulary by the rapid communication of information was primarily responsible for the initial suppression, without which the barracks might have been “carried by a *coup-de-main*” providing the insurgents with arms and ammunition that would have given “important stimulus and encouragement” to the movement.¹⁵¹ R Conway Hickson JP complained bitterly at the “temporary” withdrawal of two stations in the Killarney district, despite the beneficial effects that the concentration was demonstrated to have achieved.¹⁵² Despite the success of the strategy, Naas divulged to General Rose that he was “not pleased with the police for having always retired from them.”¹⁵³ This suggests that the very existence of a plan for strategic concentration gave the constabulary an easy ‘out’, to which they resorted too quickly, and without considering the full consequences of their actions at this point.

Although some magistrates such as C. De Gernon RM requested permission to concentrate their constabulary, for the majority remaining in the archival record the concentration was a source of outrage. Magistrates and JPs in affected districts were quick to complain about their perceived abandonment by the government. By 12 March, Naas was coming under pressure, as is evident in the correspondence from “a deputation of the Kildare magistrates who complain of the concentration of the constabulary that has taken place in the county.”¹⁵⁴ The primary problem identified by Naas was the fact that those magistrates seem not to have been sufficiently consulted as to the manner and timing of concentration. He instructed Pilkington in the Constabulary Office that the “secret instructions of the Inspector General ought to be strictly attended to, which laid down his rule that

¹⁵⁰ Ó Lúing, 132.

¹⁵¹ Peter Fitzgerald to Larcom, 13 Feb., 1867. NLI, Larcom papers, MS 11,189/7. Quoted Ó Lúing, 144.

¹⁵² R Conway Hickson to Dublin Castle, 16 Feb., 1867. NAI, CSORP, Box 1731, 2535.

¹⁵³ Rose to General Sir A Horsford (private correspondence), 27 Feb., 1867. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,823, 207-8. The opinion was discussed by Rose in this private correspondence with his old friend, Horsford.

¹⁵⁴ C. DeGernon RM to Larcom, 4 Mar., 1867. NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 1732, 3475.

concentration ought not to take place unless the lives of the men are placed in imminent danger, by remaining in their stations.”¹⁵⁵

A similar situation existed in Wicklow. One of its Justices of the Peace wrote to Naas to appraise him on this situation.

I presume you are aware that the police have been withdrawn from Kilbride barrack. I have no doubt they are required in Blessington, but their removal leaves all this mountain district unprotected. I am the only proprietor remaining in the locality and it seems to me as a magistrate my duty lies here.¹⁵⁶

Pratt warned Naas that “parties of Fenians” (presumably those who had been dispersed from Tallaght Hill) had visited public houses in the neighbourhood with the goal of acquiring provision, and that in its current state the government had left “Kippure and Sally Gap, Glenbride and Ballyknocken” unduly exposed and undefended.¹⁵⁷ Naas responded by noting that he was “much opposed to concentration of the constabulary” except in exceptional circumstances and, like in the case of his Kildare colleagues, he insisted that it should only occur “in accordance with the wishes of the magistracy of the district in which the men are stationed.”¹⁵⁸ This opinion accords strongly with that of Henry Creed of Ballycotton, who wrote to the Under Secretary to point out how this strategic concentration might be exploited by the Fenians. He argued that, “the purpose in getting police concentrated from small stations is to attack coastguard stations and smuggle in arms. There will be risings in the large towns in order to concentrate the military.”¹⁵⁹ Therefore, the desire to deny Fenians a small, early victory in the field was viewed as having potentially dire consequences, in the event that a timely shipment of arms could be coordinated by the American Fenians and landed safely.

The lucid response of the magistrates of the Ballineen Petty Sessions, (County Cork) on 18 Feb 1867, demonstrates that while the plan for strategic concentration may have been soundly conceived, it was implemented with undue haste. Their letter of complaint, which illustrates the many practical difficulties

¹⁵⁵ Naas to Pilkington, 12 Mar., 1867. NLI, Mayo Papers. 43,849/3.

¹⁵⁶ Fitzmaurice Pratt (Wicklow JP) to Lord Naas. 11 Mar., 1867. NLI, Mayo Papers. 43,849/3.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Naas to Pratt, 12 Mar., 1867. NLI, Mayo Papers, 43,849/3.

¹⁵⁹ Henry Creed (Ballycotton) to Larcom, 9 Mar., 1867. NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 1732, 3891.

associated with the concentration, merits reproduction at length here. They complained that,

At this juncture, however, another measure has been adopted, which the magistrates assembled in Petty Sessions here this day view with regret, as being in their opinion calculated only to cause alarm while it does not seem likely, in the present state of the country, [to] answer any good purpose. I allude to the sudden calling in of the rural police, and their concentration in the towns; for this measure there seems to us to be at present no adequate cause – the military dispersed through the country are, we believe, fully equal to any force that is likely to oppose them, and unless the Government are in possession of intelligence of which we are not cognizant, we are, with all respect, of opinion that it would be better to permit the police to remain at their respective posts, a measure which would tend to give confidence to the loyal portion of the community and overawe those that are otherwise minded, as well as to afford intelligence from their respective localities. Having just made confidential enquiries of the police of the surrounding sub-districts, attending this day's Petty Sessions, they are unanimously of opinion that this neighbourhood is perfectly quiet, and that its condition affords no grounds whatever for alarm.¹⁶⁰

By contrast, the concentration in Boyle, Co. Roscommon “brought in police from near out-stations”, which allowed for adequately strong patrols of both the town and the countryside to be formed in coordination with military. So, while the IC was withdrawn, they continued to assert a degree of presence with the instigation of patrols, which paralleled the army's use of flying columns.¹⁶¹

In the absence of an overall ‘Return’ or memorandum that outlined the extent to which concentration was implemented, a detailed examination of the CSORP and newspaper reports has resulted in the compiling of Map 2.2 (below), which indicates that the concentration of the IC was widespread, though focused in the most disaffected districts of the south west. It must be noted, however, that the incidence of concentration may well have been far more extensive, but under-reported in areas where no threatening Fenian activity emerged, or where the lack of a perceived threat failed to stimulate magistrates to complain. Given that the plans for concentration were implemented at the discretion of each locality, it is extremely difficult to give a precise description of the scale of the constabulary at their most concentrated. However, if it is assumed (as seems reasonable) that

¹⁶⁰ Chairman of Petty Sessions, Ballineen to Chief Secretary Naas, 18 Feb., 1867. NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 1731, 2727.

¹⁶¹ James Butler RM to CS & US, 7 Mar., 1867. NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 1732, 3678.

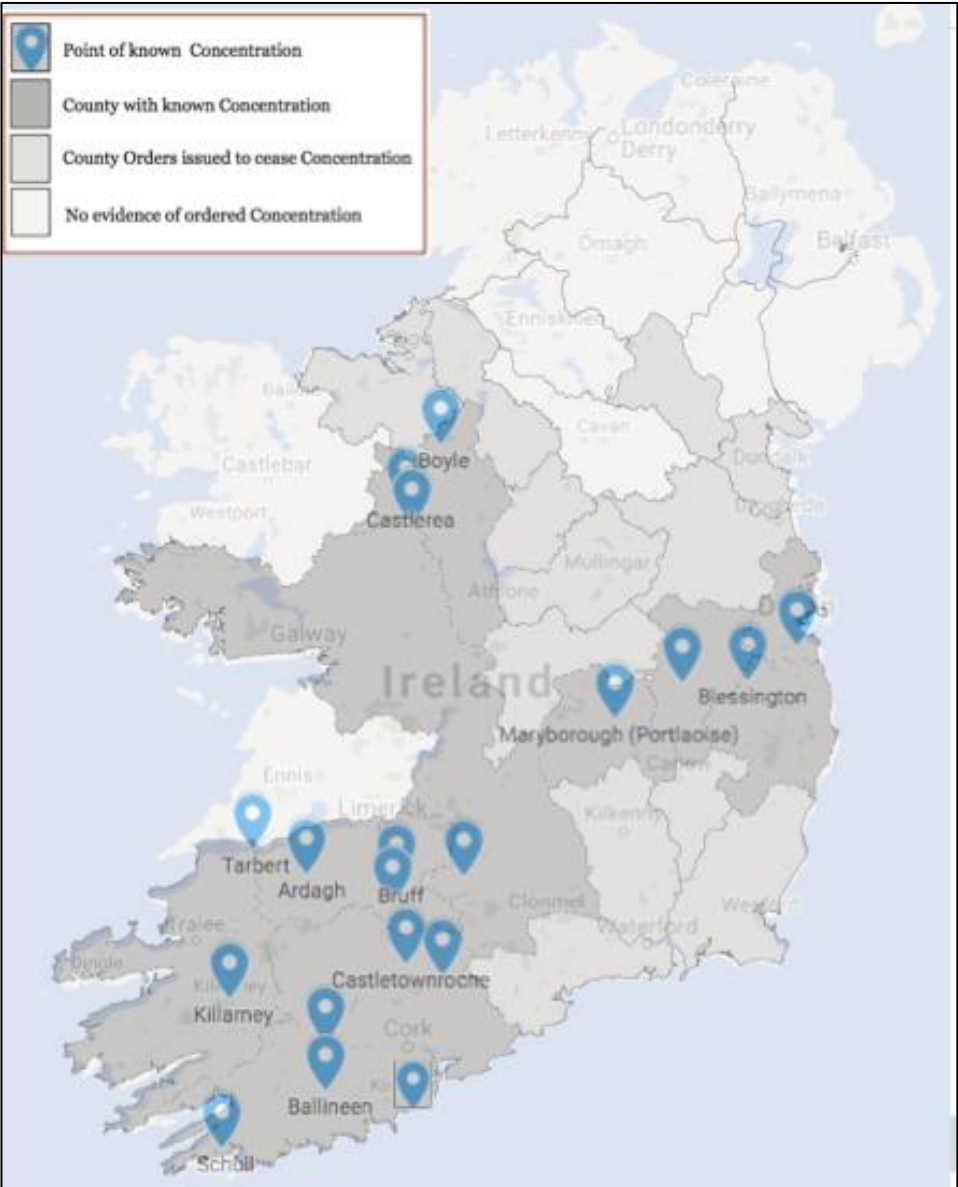
orders to end concentration were only issued to areas where it had actually occurred, then an estimate of the scale of the action can be seen below.

Within a week of the failed rising, both the government and the Inspector General felt that the need for concentration of the outposts “has now passed” and they urged sub-inspectors of districts to consult with the local magistrates to re-establish the regular deployment.¹⁶² In the unlikely event of such a concentration being again required Col. Wood learned from the mistakes of over-hasty concentration and reiterated to county inspectors that they should “take care that the magistrates are duly consulted and their concurrence obtained as directed.”¹⁶³ It also seems likely that in the areas where magistrates had been most conscientiously consulted, there would have been less likelihood of legitimate grounds for complaint, without which a more substantial archival record may have grown. Where the concentration was unproblematic, it becomes relatively invisible in the archival record.

¹⁶² Memorandum Constabulary Office to selected Co Inspectors. 13 Mar., 1867. NLI, Mayo Papers, MS 43,887/2.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

Map 2.2. Areas known to have implemented strategic concentration and areas to which orders to cease concentration were issued.



Source: See Footnote 164.

¹⁶⁴ Compiled from evidence from, but not limited to, the following sources: (Tarbert) Petition to Dublin Castle, 14 Feb., 1867. NAI, CSORP, Box 1731, 2618. (Ballineen) Chairman of Petty Sessions, Ballineen to Chief Secretary, 18 Feb., 1867. NAI, CSORP, Box 1731, 2727. (Schull) Thomas Somerville JP to Naas, 19 Feb., 1867. NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 1731, 2814. (Bruff) D.B. Franks RM to Naas, 21 Feb., 1867. NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 1731, 2887. (Tipperary) J Massy JP, to Naas, 21 Feb., 1867. NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 1731, 2891. (Glencullen) C. O’Connell Fitzsimon to Larcom, 8 Mar., 1867. NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 1732, 3839. Castlerea Petty Sessions magistrates to Larcom, 9 Mar., 1867. NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 1732, 3907. (Castletownroche) Charles Tisdale to Naas, 14 Mar., 1867. NAI CSORP 1867. Box 1732, 4388. (Fermoy) *Irish Examiner*, 21 Mar., 1867. (Kilmallock and Ardagh) Oliver Moriarty RM to Larcom, 6 Mar., 1867. NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 1731, 2581. Kinsale, Col. Wood Memorandum, Constabulary Office, NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 1733, 4989 & 4493.

Special Constables

With the perceived abandonment of isolated areas came reciprocal calls from the gentry to enrol Special Constables to address the apparent deficit. This presented both political and practical difficulties for the Irish Executive. Politically, such an action was in direct contrast to the general trend of centralizing control over the constabulary that had occurred throughout the century. It was to be Justices of the Peace and local magistrates acting autonomously who were empowered to enrol the constables, far beyond the direct control of Dublin Castle. Not only might this be viewed as a partial reversion to the baronial constable model of the early decades of the century, but it also highlights the disparity of implementation of liberal principles between Ireland and Britain. Practically speaking, the indiscriminate enrolment of Special Constables risked both Fenian infiltration and the possibility of armed sectarian violence. Within the historiography, offers to form loyalist mutual defence associations, such as Special Constables, are described as being “firmly but courteously declined” by the Executive, but are otherwise not discussed.¹⁶⁵ This too-brief examination paints an incomplete picture of the situation in Ireland at the outbreak of the 1867 rising, particularly when contrasted against the broad range of volunteering practices in Britain at the time. Moreover, the more limited use of SCs in 1848, discussed above, suggests the increased importance of a detailed examination of the role of SCs in this period.

For Wodehouse the use of SCs was an anathema. His response to a suggestion from General Rose at the close of 1865 outlined the myriad difficulties which he saw SCs would pose. He cautioned Rose that he was

[...] afraid the remedy of ‘special’ constabulary would be worse than the disease. The small tradesmen in the Southern towns are disaffected and the gentlemen too few to be effective. In the North to swear in special constables would inevitably produce a ‘free’ fight between Orangemen and Catholics which would not be quelled without the use of military force and bloodshed.”¹⁶⁶

The matter was further complicated by Wodehouse’s erroneous view that “you cannot pick and choose special constables, but must swear in all respectable persons who present themselves,” which seems to be at odds with the relevant

¹⁶⁵ Jenkins, *The Fenian Problem*, 72.

¹⁶⁶ Wodehouse to Rose, 20 Dec., 1865. Bodl. Kim. MS Eng C, 4039, 18-20.

legislation.¹⁶⁷ To enrol would increase alarm by seeming reactionary, produce serious embarrassment to the government, and, due to the obvious possibility of infiltration, be “attended with very dangerous consequences.”¹⁶⁸

In this matter the Naas administration was entirely in agreement. Within six months of resuming office, and with tensions continuing to rise, Naas acknowledged that “many applications are being made to us on the part of the loyal population to sanction the swearing in of special constables, and for making preparation for armed defence.” He felt, however, that while “no objection could be offered to persons placing their dwellings in a sufficient state of defence, I think it would be most undesirable that any body of men not in the service of the government should commence anything like a system of patrolling or moving about in armed bodies.”¹⁶⁹ His primary justification lay in the fact that it would be perceived in the media as “a political or sectarian demonstration” likely to hinder rather than help the government in their task. To those who offered their services to the government, Naas requested that their “prudence should be equal to their loyalty”.¹⁷⁰ This response remained standard until the point at which necessity trumped politics, particularly when it became widely reported in the media that a manifesto has been issued from the Grand Orange Lodge. The proposal highlighted the failure on the part of successive governments to avail of their offers to arm, which they felt resulted in a “great injustice” being done to them, and they reiterated their promise of aid in the form of a “powerful and united body” to be placed at the disposal of the Executive.”¹⁷¹

For the increasingly anxious and under-supported Inspector General of Constabulary, the enrolment of SCs offered a practical method of potentially reinforcing his isolated men, while also providing sufficient political cover to avoid later blame. In a situation where “the greater portion of the constabulary barracks [were] incapable of defence and in isolated positions”, and with the failure of the

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Naas to WKH Dolling, 3 Dec., 1866. PRONI, Abercorn Papers, T2541/VR/85/4.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ *Irish Examiner*, 8 Dec., 1866.

military to offer sufficient additional protection, Wood felt it imperative to clarify his position. He deemed it his duty to re-emphasise his

opinion in writing, and at the same time to bring under the consideration of government [that] in the event of no further assistance being offered me by the military, the desirability of swearing in Special Constables, allowing the loyalist to arm, and organizing them in bodies to co-operate with the constabulary in the various towns and villages throughout the country.¹⁷²

Following in the same vein as Brownrigg's earlier attempt to deflect future criticism, the enrolment also offered Wood political cover. He concluded his memorandum to the Chief Secretary by seeking an assurance that, "in the event of an abandonment of any of the posts, or if the lives of the men are sacrificed, I trust I may be exonerated from any blame."¹⁷³ The level of political support needed to cover his potential liability became more tempered by the time a subsequent official memorandum on the matter was issued. By January 1867 Wood had rolled back his position and felt that the only SCs who might legitimately be engaged were constabulary pensioners, who might be expected to return to former positions, rather than the relatively indiscriminate enrolment he had earlier suggested.¹⁷⁴

The private calls for enrolment were echoed in public with the publication of a memorial from Lord Fermoy and his fellow Cork magistrates in early December 1866.¹⁷⁵ This forced Naas's hand further. The administration had little choice but to issue a proclamation in response to Lord Fermoy. The "*Memorandum as to Special Constables and the Powers and Duties of Magistrates*" (See Appendix B) was syndicated in national and local newspapers.¹⁷⁶ The memorandum referenced the relevant legislation to deal with the role of Special Constables in Ireland. The government was "anxious to call the attention of the Magistrates to the provisions

¹⁷² IGC Wood on Memorandum on Special Constables to Chief Secretary, 6 Dec. 1866. NAI, CSORP 1866. Box 1719, 21981.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Secret and Confidential Memorandum of Inspector General John Stewart Wood, 1 Jan., 1866. NLI, Mayo Papers, MS 43,887/2. It might be noted that he did not invoke the potential coercive measures suggested by McGregor, namely removal of pensions for those who refused service as an SC.

¹⁷⁵ *The Nation*, 15 Dec., 1866.

¹⁷⁶ Lord Naas, 11 Mar., 1867. Memorandum as to Special constables and the Powers and Duties of Magistrates. PRONI, Abercorn Papers. T2541VR/85/8. See for example, *Freeman's Journal*, 12 Mar., 1867. *Irish Examiner*, 13 Mar., 1867. *Tralee Chronicle* and *Killarney Echo*, 15 Mar., 1867. *Kerry Evening Post*, 16 Mar., 1867. *Tuam Herald*, 16 Mar., 1867.

of the Statute”, namely the ‘Whiteboy Acts’ (15 & 16 Geo. III., c 21 and 1 & 2 Wm. IV., c 44), which outlined the powers available. A further act, “*to Amend the Laws of Ireland relative to the Appointment of Special Constables, and for the better Preservation of the Peace*” also seems to have offered practical guidance. The ensuing *Memorandum* is essentially a précis of the 1832 Act.¹⁷⁷ The memorandum conceded that “in the present state of the country the enrolment of Special Constables may be desirable”, and it enumerated the pre-conditions of such an enrolment. These included times when there existed “reasonable apprehension of riot, tumult, or insurrection being disposed to by credible persons, and further, the opinion of the Justices that the Police, Military, and other regular force in the country, are not sufficient for present protection of persons and property.”¹⁷⁸

In an effort to avoid the possibility of vigilantism, Naas carefully itemized the precise powers that magistrates and SCs might wield. Article 7 of the memorandum advised that

All Magistrates and Constables are empowered and bound to apprehend, disperse, and oppose all persons so engaged, and may call upon and command all persons who are not disabled by age or infirmity to assist them in so doing; and are fully indemnified for happening to kill, maim, or hurt any person in discharging such duty.¹⁷⁹

This indemnity opened the door to the possibility of widespread sectarian conflict and gives further validity to Wodehouse’s initial reluctance to consider enrolment, particularly in the context of the 1864 Belfast riots. Although the memorandum was well publicized, requests still reached Naas asking for continued clarification as to the precise nature of the localized powers, suggesting that Naas’s best efforts to inform the magistrates had not proven entirely successful.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ ‘A Bill to Amend the Laws of Ireland Relative to the Appointment of Special Constables, and for the Better Preservation of the Peace’, Pub. L. No. 3 Wil. IV (1832). This act also repealed the earlier act governing the use of special constables, 1 Geo IV Cap. 37. *An Act to increase the Power of Magistrates in the Appointment of Special Constables*. This Act was passed, in part at least, to the death of a Special Constable during the Peterloo Massacre of 1819.

¹⁷⁸ Lord Naas, 11 Mar., 1867. Memorandum as to Special constables and the Powers and Duties of Magistrates. PRONI, Abercorn Papers. T2541VR/85/8.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, Article 7.

¹⁸⁰ See, for example, James Gallaher, Castlepark, Kanturk to Naas, 11 Mar., 1867. NAI CSORP 1867. Box 1732, 4249.

With the IC withdrawing and the army forming flying columns that were constantly on the move, it seems that, by default, many areas would potentially find themselves under the sole protection of SCs. Lord Fermoy noted publically that “as one flying column for the entire County of Cork seems inadequate to cope with anything like a general rising and [as] the police have been withdrawn from their stations”, there remained few other options than the recourse to SCs.¹⁸¹ While the government was keen to avoid such a situation developing, their ability to refuse these enrolments was now beyond their control. The difficulties which arose as a result of enrolment must, therefore, be viewed as largely a problem of the government’s own making, in failing to provide what was then considered sufficient protection.

Although previously under-explored, the Chief Secretary’s Office Registered Papers, combined with reports in national and regional newspapers, reveal widespread preparations for the use of Special Constables, though the surviving archival evidence makes it impossible to give a definitive assessment. A significant caveat remains with regard to the data presented below. Given the local autonomy granted by the Whiteboy Act, many more enrolments may have been planned on a smaller scale than those remaining in archival records. While some areas, such as south Leitrim had plans in a relatively advanced state of preparation; other areas seem to have enrolled SCs in a relatively *ad hoc* manner. It is also evident that many other areas may have had plans to enrol special constables drawn up in tandem with their plans for concentration of constabulary, but that details of those plans never made it as far as either the newspapers or the CSORP.¹⁸² Map 2.3, below, represents SCs in a broad range of incarnations, from locations where SCs were actually enrolled and sworn in (with the number enrolled in parentheses where known) to locations where names had been solicited, but no further action appears to have been taken. In total, the archival search revealed twenty-eight such locations, though none in the ten most northerly counties in a line from Sligo town to Dundalk. The trend that emerges when the concentration and SC enrolment maps are overlaid (See Map 2.4) with each other is that SC enrolment

¹⁸¹ *Tralee Chronicle* and *Killarney Echo*, 15 Mar., 1867.

¹⁸² For details of the plans of the Limerick County High Sherriff and sponsored by Major Ormsby Gore MP, see *Ballinrobe Chronicle* and *Roscommon Herald*, 29 Dec., 1867.

occurred most frequently (though not exclusively) adjacent to districts where strategic concentration had taken place, strengthening the argument that the unwelcome pressure for SC enrolment was largely of the government's own making.

Map 2.3. Enrolment of Special Constables (at all stages of implementation)



Source: See Footnote 183

¹⁸³ (Mallow, Co. Cork) Henry Manning JP to Under Secretary, 6 Mar., 1867. NAI, CSORP. Box 1732, 3569. (New Pallas, Co. Limerick) Richard Eaton JP and William Bredin JP to Dublin Castle, 7 Mar., 1867. NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 1732, 3664. (Charleville, Co. Limerick) Thomas Sanders to Larcom, 7 Mar., 1867. NAI CSORP 1867. Box 1732, 3672. (Maryborough, Queen's County) J.S. Macleod RM to Larcom, 7 Mar., 1867. NAI CSORP 1867. Box 1732, 3673 (This included 20 Militiamen from the . (Drumshanbo) Arthur Birchall, to Larcom, 8 Mar., 1867. NAI, CSORP. Box 1732, 3790. (Kilrush) John McCullagh RM Kilrush to Larcom, 10 Mar., 1867. NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 1732, 3947. (Templederry, Co. Tipperary) Thomas Sumerville, Deputy Lord Lieutenant Drishane to Naas, 9 Mar., 1867. NAI CSORP 1867. Box 1732, 4059. (Skibbereen) Arthur Preston to Larcom, 11 Mar., 1867. (Mitchelstown) Neal Brown RM to Larcom, 9 Mar., 1867. NAI CSORP 1867. Box 1732, 4335. (Tralee) Daniel McGillycuddy to Larcom, 11 Mar., 1867. NAI CSORP 1867. Box 1732, 4232. (Cloyne) Clerk of Petty Sessions of Cloyne to Dublin Castle, 5 Apr., 1867. NAI CSORP 1867. Box 1735, 6052. (Dungarvan) *Irish Examiner*, 12 Mar., 1867. (Ennis) List of Special Constables sworn in at Ennis, 12 Apr., 1867. NAI CSORP 1867. Box 1735, 6547. (Rathdowney) Magistrates at petty sessions, Rathdowney to Naas, 13 Mar., 1867. NAI CSORP 1867. Box 1732, 4297. (Durrrow) *Leinster Express*, 15 Dec., 1866.

Map 2.4. Overlay of known incidences of Strategic Concentration (blue) and Special Constable enrolment (orange)



Source: See Maps 2.2 and 2.3

A crude estimate of the number of SCs enrolled can be given based on the limited data available. The average size of reported enrolment (of the six known data points) was just over 103 constables. Extrapolating from this across the twenty-eight identified locations suggests a total of 2,898 enrolments, or approximately a third of the existing IC force. As the composite map indicates, however, this was largely grouped in the south and south-west of the country,

suggesting that their impact may have been disproportionately felt in those areas. Based on the few archival reports that comment on the composition of the lists it seems that the SCs were typically made up of a combination of “the respectable inhabitants of the town—the shopkeepers, traders, and men of business, without any distinction of creed or party” (such as those appointed in Tralee), and “well disposed farmers” (such as those appointed in Drumshambo).¹⁸⁴ In this regard, their composition closely reflected the make-up of the Special Constables of nineteenth-century Britain.¹⁸⁵

At least some effort was made to ensure the loyalty of those enrolled, though, again, it is impossible to know how many potential SCs actually took the oath. Upon enrolment each constable was required to swear the following:

I [A.B.] do swear, That I will well and truly serve our Sovereign Lord the King [Queen] in the office of Special Constable for the Parish [or, townland, or, District] of _____ without favour or affection, malice or ill will, and that I will to the best of my power cause the Peace to be kept and preserved, and prevent all Offences against the Persons and Properties of His Majesty’s Subjects; and that While I continue to hold the said office, I will to the best of my skill and knowledge discharge all the Duties thereof faithfully according to Law. So help me God.¹⁸⁶

After swearing in, each SC was liable to be called to act for a period of two calendar months, having all the powers of the regular constables, and could exercise his powers within the jurisdiction of the JP who appointed him, but could also be ordered to operate in any adjoining county. Anyone refusing to take the oath when requested by the JP would be liable to a fine of five pounds.

The practicalities of arming the SCs posed a particular problem. Different magistrates proposed a variety of possible solutions. One Mr. S Cameron, for example, queried the right of Special Constables “to hold arms without licence”, whereas the Tarbert Magistrates suggested that any enrolled constables could be supplied with the arms that had been collected as a result of the recent

¹⁸⁴ *Tralee Chronicle and Killarney Echo*, 8 Mar., 1867. & Arthur Birchall, to Larcom, 8 Mar., 1867. NAI, CSORP. Box 1732, 3790.

¹⁸⁵ Swift, ‘Policing Chartism, 1839-1848: The Role of the “Specials” Reconsidered’, 671.

¹⁸⁶ *A Bill to Amend the Laws of Ireland relative to the Appointment of Special Constables, and for the better Preservation of the Peace*, 2.

proclamation of the county.¹⁸⁷ Both the Skibereen and Rathdowney Magistrates proposed a more formal arrangement, seeking clarity as to “whether arms may be supplied to them [from the government] in addition to the stores.”¹⁸⁸ In response to many of these queries, Naas deflected responsibility from the government, noting noncommittally that “magistrates have power to act as required.”¹⁸⁹

Despite widespread support for the enrolment of Special Constables among the gentry, numerous dissenting voices emerged. Given the southern focus of the enrolments, it is unsurprising that the *Examiner* became the harshest critic of the SCs. It highlighted not only the inherent anomaly of the enrolment of SCs in a “country that has been specifically excluded from the volunteer movement,” but noted that the streets would become “impassable at night for honest, well-meaning people. For who would run the risk of being encountered and cross examined by some pot-valiant mob?”¹⁹⁰ When considered alongside the Militia training cancellations, this anomaly is further accentuated, particularly given the case in Maryborough where about twenty-five “trained militia soldiers” were placed at the disposal of the Queen’s County Magistrates by Captain Henry Battiscombe, the Adjutant of the County Militia.¹⁹¹

On practical grounds, the *Examiner* worried about abuse of the system by those “pretending to be Special Constables” who might be expected to act with a sense of impunity. Similarly, Finglas and Glasnevin had seen “the unwarrantable proceedings of persons styling themselves ‘loyalists’ who have night after night lately thought fit to parade the roads.”¹⁹² Commenting on the use of SCs during London’s Chartist riots, the *Examiner* pointed out that “judging from their history elsewhere, one is inclined to say that it is rather hard upon the [regular] police to

¹⁸⁷ S Cameron to Chief Secretary, 24 Mar., 1866. NAI, CSORP 1866, Box 1720, 5960. Petition of Tarbert Magistrates to Dublin Castle, 14 Feb., 1867. NAI, CSORP, Box 1731, 2618.

¹⁸⁸ Thomas Sumerville, Deputy Lord Lieutenant Drishane to Naas, 9 Mar., 1867. NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 1732, 4059. Magistrates at petty sessions, Rathdowney to Naas, 13 Mar., 1867. NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 1732, 4297.

¹⁸⁹ Minuted response to Arthur Birchall, Drumshanbo to Larcom, 8 Mar., 1867. NAI, CSORP. Box 1732, 3790.

¹⁹⁰ *Examiner*, 23 Mar., 1867. *Ibid.*, 12 Dec., 1866. For more on the ‘Rifle Volunteers’ see Militia Chapter (below).

¹⁹¹ J.S. Macleod RM to Larcom, 7 Mar., 1867. NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 1732, 3673

¹⁹² *Freeman’s Journal*, 13 Mar., 1867.

expect that they should have to look after both the Fenians and the Special Constables at the same time,” indicating that the paper expected sworn constables to cause more problems than they solved.¹⁹³

The enrolment of SCs also overlaps with different incarnations of volunteerism, bridging a gap between the cancelled militia training, the disbanded Yeomanry, and the lack of an official ‘Rifle Volunteer’ movement as existed in Britain.¹⁹⁴ This is best illustrated by Dublin’s Lord Mayor, William Lane-Joynt, who in March 1867 wrote to the Irish Executive to ask “if there be any action which he would suggest to the Loyal Citizens to take in the present crisis,” such as meetings, public addresses, and the swearing in of Special Constables.¹⁹⁵ Another, more radical plan was suggested to Under Secretary Larcom, namely the formation of a ludicrously large 20,000 man strong “volunteer corps” in Dublin city, which when divided into parish regiments would be a demonstration of “loyal protection from their [Fenian] strengths.”¹⁹⁶ The most intricate element of this proposed force was the prospect of early warning alerts, planned, somewhat outlandishly, with a system of rockets for immediate notification of an outbreak. Unsurprisingly, the Executive did not act on this proposal.

The enrolment of Special Constables in reaction to Fenianism also had transnational implications that further highlighted the disparities in administration between the two countries. The aborted Chester Raid of February 1867 and dispersal of the Fenians resulted in SCs being enrolled rapidly in both Chester and Liverpool.¹⁹⁷ Similar steps were undertaken to preserve public order and stop Irish riots throughout Britain in reaction to the anti-Catholic public lectures of the firebrand William Murphy, the “Gospel Garibaldi”.¹⁹⁸ SCs were enrolled in Wolverhampton, Rochdale, Walsall (160), and Birmingham (600), in

¹⁹³ *Irish Examiner*, 16 Mar., 1867.

¹⁹⁴ For a contrast with the British ‘Rifle Volunteer’ movement during the ‘3rd Panic’ from 1859, see Ian Beckett, *Britain’s Part-Time Soldiers. The Amateur Military Tradition, 1558-1945* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2011), 163–95.

¹⁹⁵ William Lane-Joynt to Larcom. 6 Mar. 1867. NLI, Larcom Papers, MS 7594.

¹⁹⁶ Charles Smyth to Larcom, 6 Mar. 1867. NLI, Larcom papers, MS 7594.

¹⁹⁷ *Irish Examiner*, 13 Feb., 1867.

¹⁹⁸ *Irish Examiner*, 25 Feb., 1867.

part due to Murphy's fear of "mob law and Fenian assassination."¹⁹⁹ Similar reports emerged that also suggested the possibility of 1,000 SCs being sworn in in Glasgow in anticipation of unrest.²⁰⁰ These, and later British enrolments, contrast starkly with the Irish situation. While there were contrasting demands and condemnations in Ireland, the enrolment of SCs in Britain was enthusiastically embraced, particularly following the Manchester Prison escape and the Clerkenwell explosion.

A second phase of enrolment in Britain involved considerable cooperation with existing Constabularies. As Jenkins notes, while the Cabinet rejected the possibility of extending *habeas corpus* suspension to Britain, "tens of thousands of public-spirited citizens were enrolled as special constables" who voted on their own officers and aligned themselves in parallel with existing police divisions.²⁰¹ The precise figures dwarf the Irish estimates presented above. In the London metropolitan area alone, some 52,974 Special Constables were enrolled by January, 1868. The Special Constables Office in Wellington Barracks reported the enrolment of 113,674 Special Constables nationwide.²⁰² The most apparent difference between the two incarnations of SCs across Britain and Ireland, however, was that in Britain they were designed to act as an auxiliary to supplement the regular police and army by generally "protecting public buildings, policing crowds, and breaking up disturbances", whereas in Ireland, their enrolment was viewed only as a last resort when both police and army were absent from an area, and their potential uses were not limited to secondary functions.²⁰³

A discussion of the role of SCs, therefore, highlights the disparity in the concept of active citizenship in Britain and Ireland. Not only was Ireland

¹⁹⁹ Walter Arnstein, 'The Murphy Riots: A Victorian Dilemma', *Victorian Studies* Vol. 19, no. No. 1 (September 1975): 60.

²⁰⁰ Jenkins, *The Fenian Problem*, 100 & 192. *Irish Examiner*, 22 Mar., 1867.

²⁰¹ Jenkins, *The Fenian Problem*, 166; Jenkins, 178.

²⁰² Return of Special Constables in the City and Metropolitan Districts of London, Special Constables Office, Wellington Barracks. 28 January, 1868. TNA, HO 45/7799, 2502-22. Return of Special Constables in Great Britain, 7 February, 1868. TNA, HO 45/7799, 2428-47.

²⁰³ Swift, 'Policing Chartism, 1839-1848: The Role of the "Specials" Reconsidered', 674. This pattern of auxiliary usage was not even across Britain, particularly in the most rural counties who had yet to adopt the 1839 County Police Act. See, *ibid.*, 678.

intentionally omitted from the Volunteer movement, the existence of Volunteers in Britain further complicated the enrolment question. As a direct result of the “events that recently took place in Chester”, the issue was raised in Parliament to clarify the responsibilities of and limitations upon members of the Volunteer movement in Britain. The Volunteers had been envisaged as an extra militia to help in repulsing a potential French invasion, but they should not be asked to perform duties in aid of the civil power. The Attorney General clarified that “Volunteers cannot be called upon as a military body by the civil authorities for any purpose, [but that it was] equally well established that they are not released from the discharge of their duties as citizens.”²⁰⁴ This placed the government in a difficult position, with the opposition seeking clarity on the position by requesting the Attorney General to draw up short instructions to show whether Volunteers were to act “on such occasions as citizens or soldiers”, much as had been done in Ireland.²⁰⁵

Ultimately, even those few SCs who were enrolled in Ireland were not called upon to act in any significant manner, either locally or nationally. The public and private debates around their possible use, however, highlight the political and practical problems that were associated with this ‘last line of defence’ and the contingencies that were relied upon by the most isolated and vulnerable elements of loyal Irish society. It was to the Special Constables that the gentry would resort when they discovered that the reach of the state’s infrastructural power had failed to meet their needs or assuage their growing anxieties, and as such, this response merits a deeper exploration than exists in the current historiography.

* * *

It seems evident that even had the Fenians managed to seize some of the local IC barracks, they could not have held them for long, certainly not long enough for reinforcements to arrive from Britain or America. This does not invalidate the point, however, that the IC provided one of the most obvious targets for the

²⁰⁴ HC Deb 08 March 1867 vol 185, 1576-7.

²⁰⁵ HC Deb 08 March 1867 vol 185, 1851. These instructions have yet to be found in archival searches.

insurgents, and that local defeats might have provided great propaganda value for subsequent generations. This rising itself stretched the constabulary to its limits, without revealing anything but the smallest of cracks. In reply to one of the many requests for additional manpower, Larcom wrote to the Midleton Resident Magistrates in March 1867 that there was “not one available man at the depot and reinforcements are being daily applied for from different parts of the country.”²⁰⁶ Nonetheless, the fractured, mismanaged, and heavily infiltrated rising was overcome with significant approbation on the part of the Irish Constabulary. General Rose, not renowned for his generosity of spirit, was quick to express his hope that all those who had performed so efficiently at Tallaght Hill would be promoted.²⁰⁷ Similarly, the Chief Secretary issued a memorandum noting that “Many members of the Irish Constabulary displayed loyalty, fidelity and courage during the past week”, a statement which endorsed the opinions of all its former Inspectors General.²⁰⁸ Ultimately, the force was granted the title ‘Royal’ in recognition of its contribution to the suppression of Fenianism in a lavish ceremony in the Depot yard in the Phoenix Park that September. Here Naas “presented medals and other rewards to several of its members who distinguished themselves during the late insurrectionary movements” and produced a booklet chronicling the ceremony, a copy of which was forwarded to each barracks around the country as a token of gratitude for their loyalty.²⁰⁹

While the plan for strategic concentration appears to have been only briefly implemented, it had a lasting impact on the commander of the forces. When in the aftermath of the rising the government sought to upgrade the fortifications of some of the isolated constabulary barracks, many of the plans were frustrated because of reluctance on the part of the constabulary’s commanders. Naas bemoaned this fact to Abercorn when he noted that it was widely known that “the

²⁰⁶ Larcom to E Ryan RM (Midleton), 11 Mar., 1867. NAI CSORP 1867. Box 1732, 4069.

²⁰⁷ Rose to Abercorn, 6 Mar., 1867. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,823, 225.

²⁰⁸ Memorandum of Chief Secretary’s Office, 20 Mar., 1867. NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 1733, 4783. See also, “Resolution passed by the Magistrates of the County of Dublin expressing their approbation of the conduct of the Constabulary and Metropolitan Police during the Fenian Rising”, 3 Apr., 1867. NAI CSORP 1867. Box 1735, 5998.

²⁰⁹ Anon, *Proceedings at the Constabulary Depot, Phoenix Park, 6th September, 1867. On the Conferring the Title of ‘Royal Irish Constabulary’ and Presenting Medals and Rewards to Members of the Force.* (Dublin: Alexander Thom and Co., 1867), 2.

head of the force is against anything but building large central barracks in each district to which the men would be withdrawn on the first opportunity.”²¹⁰ This suggests that, to Colonel Wood at least, the relatively *ad hoc* plan issued at the start of 1866 was to be incorporated into the long-term strategy that influenced the future system of police distribution. As with the seemingly miraculous appearance of Sub-Inspector Trent and his column of militarized constabulary in 1848, the appearance of Sub-Inspector Burke at Tallaght with his force has gone un-interrogated until now. This chapter has offered the context in which those actions emerged, fully contextualized for the first time.

Even the decision to grant the title of “Royal” to the Irish Constabulary in September 1867 might be viewed through a counterinsurgency lens. Though the suppression of Fenianism was a burden that was shared by virtually every branch of state power, it was the constabulary that received the most visible and lasting rewards for the defeat of Fenianism. Stressing the foreign aspects of Fenianism could be interpreted as seeking to retrospectively downplay the growth of advanced physical-force nationalism in Ireland. Regardless of whether this accurately represented the situation on the ground in rural Ireland, this was a continuation of a process that was already well developed as early as 1865. That summer Rose wrote to Wodehouse with his analysis of the security situation noting that Ribbonism was “pure Irish, a religious growth, the other [Fenianism] is of Irish origin, but tinged with Americanism, free thinking or free acting, and not subject to religious discipline and control.”²¹¹ Michael de Nie described a similar process, whereby the media described the Irish as “dupes” and the Irish-Americans as “plotters”, a trend reinforced in the immediate aftermath of the rising.²¹² Therefore, the presentation of the Fenian Rising as the ‘domestic’ [Royal] Irish Constabulary suppressing the ‘external’ Fenian threat could be seen as contributing to the COIN process as a whole. That this process was perpetuated within subsequent histories is, correspondingly, unsurprising.

²¹⁰ Naas to Abercorn, 13 Feb., 1868. PRONI, Abercorn Papers. T2541/VR/85/45.

²¹¹ Rose to Wodehouse, 27 Aug., 1865. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4030, 164-7.

²¹² Nie, ‘A Medley Mob of Irish-American Plotters and Irish Dupes’.

So keen was the Executive to demonstrate its appreciation of the IC that it corresponded with the Inspector General to express the “high sense of gallantry of the force” and to ascertain his opinion as to the best way in which to reward the force. Col. Wood’s response was that “a vote of £4,000” should be granted to the men of the force and that “in future the force should be called the ‘Royal’ or the ‘Queen’s’ Constabulary of Ireland.”²¹³ That this correspondence was subsequently published demonstrates the degree to which the Executive found it expedient to emphasise that the defensive effort was primarily focussed around its Irish Constabulary and focussed against the externalized threat posed by American-led Fenians. The shrewdness of shifting attention away from Irish Fenianism was as politically useful as the bolstering of the Royal Irish Constabulary’s prestige was useful for potential future counterinsurgency activities.

Despite the demonstrable benefits of cooperation, however, the IC remained relatively isolated within their more militarized barracks, and became increasingly ‘domesticated’ in the half century that followed the rising.²¹⁴ Rose’s efforts to formalize and further develop the integrated system of defence that he had championed were stymied when he discovered, to his disgust, that, “that the Lords Justices do not deem it necessary that the Constabulary on the coast should be instructed in the new system [of signalling] introduced by a Royal Engineer Officer.”²¹⁵ This suggests that a more detailed investigation of the cooperation of different branches of state power in peacetime is needed in order to assess the long-term legacies of the Fenian rising for the state’s defensive infrastructure.

It had been hoped that further examination of the distribution and the stages of enrolment of the SCs might have revealed further insights into local variation in the reaction to Fenianism. At this stage, however, there is insufficient archival material to undertake that kind of micro-level investigation. Similarly, an examination of the way in which the IC utilized the newly emerging technologies, such as the expanding telegraphy and rail networks, could provide equally revealing insights. However, neither the CSORP nor the railway archives appear to

²¹³ *Express*, 19 August 1867.

²¹⁴ Lowe and Malcolm, ‘The Domestication of the Royal Irish Constabulary’.

²¹⁵ Rose to Abercorn, 27 Jul., 1867. BL, Rose Papers, ADD MS 42,824, 123.

contain the level of data required to undertake a close analysis such as has been attempted in assessing the army's growing dependence on the railway. (See Figure 3.6 and Figure 3.7, below) Nonetheless, further transnational comparison of the use of SCs in England, Scotland, and Ireland in that era may yet offer a sufficiently rich vein of archival material to increase our understanding of the infrastructural capabilities and limitations of state power in the mid-Victorian period.

Part II – The Military Sphere

Chapter 3 – “Physic for Fenians”: The British Army and Fenianism

“... there was nothing to fight, but to reassure the people who were much and unnecessarily alarmed, and to enable the Police to search all suspected homes for arms and implicated parties than which nothing produces a more wholesome effect, as was experienced in the extensive districts and mountains traversed by the Flying Columns. All the guilty were as much in dread of, as the loyal were pleased by, this sudden and ubiquitous visit, evidently quite unexpected.”¹

Writing to Colonel Charles Shute of the 4th Dragoon Guards less than a month after the outbreak of the rising, General Sir Hugh Rose explained how the army under his command had contributed to the suppression of Fenianism. In the two years prior to this, his army had developed from a force garrisoned in the large barracks of the major Irish cities to a force whose “ubiquitous visits” saw the army assert its presence deeper into the Irish countryside than at any time since the Act of Union. This capability had developed as a result of numerous reforms of the British Army in Ireland, based on the experience that the Commanding General and his senior officers had accumulated during their imperial service. As the Irish Executive had expected, there were no decisive pitched battles and no active campaigning that could contribute to the army’s reputation in the way the Crimean War or the Indian Mutiny had done. Nevertheless, the army played a significant role in the deterrence and suppression of Fenianism, just one of its myriad of duties throughout the empire.

E.M. Spiers has described the army’s imperial duties in the late 1860s by noting that, in addition to ‘Home Defence’, it also

had to provide drafts and reliefs for garrisons in India, where British military commitments had increased in the wake of the Mutiny, and for garrisons in widely scattered colonies. It had to be able to send expeditionary forces to small colonial conflicts and to intervene if necessary, on the continent. Finally it had to furnish support for the civil power, especially in Ireland, where Fenian disturbances had recently occurred.²

¹ Rose to Col. Shute, 10 Apr. 1867. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,824, 32-3.

² Spiers, E.M., *The Late Victorian Army 1868-1902* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), 9.

While only the final duty, the support for the “civil power”, is referred to as specifically concerning Ireland, this chapter argues that the broader imperial concerns outlined by Spiers had a direct impact on the army’s response to Fenianism in the 1860s. At times this was a direct result of specific War Office policies, while other outcomes simply reflected the tensions that emerged in an army transitioning from its Napoleonic to its post-Cardwell form.³ The series of reforms that occurred between the Young Ireland and Fenian risings contributed to an expansion of the state’s infrastructural power by improving its “subnational variations of power”, what might be better understood in military parlance as facilitating a far wider range of action ‘in the field’.⁴ To interrogate this process, this chapter begins with an examination of the army’s multiple roles in Ireland, before turning to consider the extent and impact of the domestic and imperial reforms. It examines the army’s use of the developing infrastructure and concludes by considering the impact of the Flying Columns that were formed at the outbreak of the rising.

The General Officer Commanding in Ireland maintained both a domestic and a broader imperial perspective, while his civil counterparts focused on the internal challenges. This disparity of perspective was complicated by the fact that the army in Ireland found itself caught in the middle of an administrative power struggle. This had emerged from the “primitive jungle of military administration which had survived the pressures of the Napoleonic wars”, and resulted in numerous inefficiencies in the administration of the army.⁵ Albert Tucker has described the tension between the civilian War Office and military ‘Horse Guards’⁶ by noting,

In finance and supply it [the Army] was dependent on Parliament through a civilian Secretary of State for War, while its command,

³ Edward Cardwell, Secretary of State for War in Gladstone’s Liberal Government (Dec. 1868 – Feb. 1874) famed for his reforms of the British Army, particularly the abolition of the “Purchase System” in 1871. See; Albert V. Tucker, ‘Army and Society in England 1870-1900: A Reassessment of the Cardwell Reforms’, *Journal of British Studies* 2, no. 2 (May 1963): 110–41.

⁴ Mann, ‘Infrastructural Power Revisited’, 37.

⁵ Hew Strachan, ‘The Early Victorian Army and the Nineteenth-Century Revolution in Government’, *The English Historical Review* 95, no. 377 (October 1980): 782.

⁶ The “Horse Guards” refers to the central army administration that operated independently from War Office control up until the passage of the War Office Act of 1870, a part of the Cardwell Reforms of the period. The Civil-Military conflict between the two continued, however, until the end of the Century.

discipline, and patronage were all exercised through the Commander-in-Chief [in the Horse Guards] who held office at the pleasure of the Crown, sitting in the House of Lords but not in the Cabinet.⁷

The overlap of responsibilities between the Ordnance Board and the Office of the Quartermaster General resulted in multiple inefficiencies and redundancies that required reform and that had a direct impact on the capabilities of the army outside Britain.⁸ The empire-wide civil-military tensions that emerged were further exacerbated in Ireland because it lay outside the strictly delineated regulations for different categories of service.

In light of the current historiography, the goal of this chapter is to engage with the trends that have been identified in the use of the army in Ireland over the long nineteenth century, and to investigate not only the policies that underpinned them but also the implementation of these ideas over a narrow period of time. It seeks to add nuance to existing narratives of the role of the Army in Ireland and of its impact on Irish affairs by contextualizing these concerns within imperial patterns. The experience of the Summer Assizes of 1866 attested to the “tranquillity and absence of outrage so generally prevailing”, which might otherwise have required significant attention from the army in support of their civil counterparts in the Constabulary. By the late 1860s, therefore, the British Army in Ireland was dedicated almost exclusively to counterinsurgency activities. This included the deterrence of planned Irish-American filibustering expeditions, the suppression of any internal insurrectionary movements, and the necessity to allay the growing anxiety of the Irish gentry. All this resulted in the successful suppression of the rising, but at the cost of dramatically increased tension between Ireland’s civil and military administrations.⁹

During the 1860s, the British Army’s garrison in Ireland fluctuated in strength between approximately 17,000 and 26,000 men. In the army as a whole

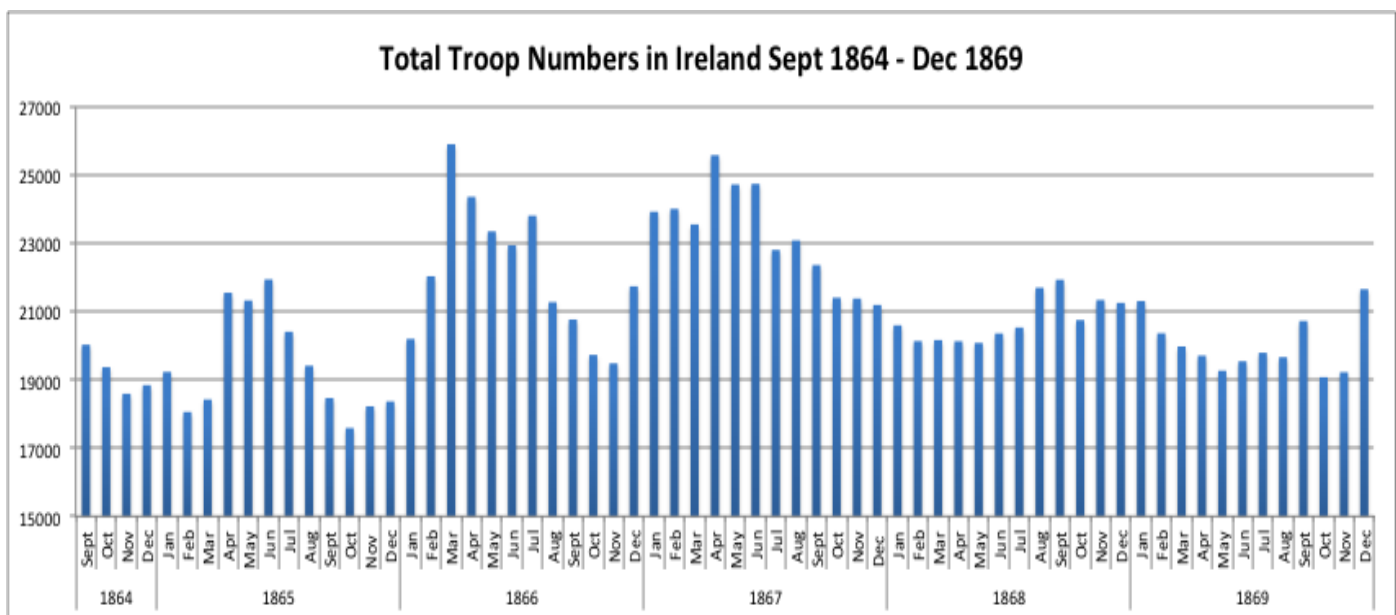
⁷ Tucker, ‘Army and Society in England 1870-1900: A Reassessment of the Cardwell Reforms’, 112.

⁸ See also; Paul Harpin, ‘The British War Office: From the Crimean War to Cardwell, 1855-1868’ (Masters Thesis, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 1976), 13; Hampden Gordon, *The War Office* (London: Putnam, 1935), 48–56. The office of the “Secretary of State for War” was known as the “Secretary of State for War and the Colonies” between 1801 and 1854.

⁹ High Sherriff of County Cavan to Wodehouse, Memorandum regarding the Summer Assizes, 1866. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4059, 61.

between 24-28 per cent were Irish born, but this varied considerably from regiment to regiment.¹⁰ The Irish garrison accounted for approximately 10 per cent of the British Army, which totalled 235,000 in 1865.¹¹ The wide fluctuations in Irish numbers can be partly accounted for, not by deliberate governmental policy as one might expect, but from incidental factors such as the arrival and departure of relief troops. This number usually peaked during the late summer due to the concentration of troops in Dublin and the Curragh for training (with the exception of the relatively small planned reinforcement of February 1866, evident on Figure 3.1 below). Thus, the reasons behind the army's increased capability must be sought elsewhere. Earl de Grey in the War Office was consistently "anxious to avoid increasing the Army in Ireland, if possible, on account of the effect which such a step would have both in Ireland itself and abroad in giving importance to the Fenian movement."¹² Reinforcing the army might be seen as a sign of weakness, provoking panic rather than providing confidence to the loyal Irish population.

Figure 3.1. Total Troop Number in Ireland September 1864 - December 1869



Source: War Office: TNA, WO 73/6-10

¹⁰ H.J. Hanham, 'Religion and Nationality in the Mid-Victorian Army', in *War and Society: Historical Essays in Honour and Memory of J.R. Western 1928-1971*, ed. M.R.D. Foot (London: Elek Books, 1973), 162. Some regiments had as much as 60% Irish-born or of Irish decent, even in ostensibly "English" Regiments.

¹¹ TNA, WO 73/6-10.

¹² Earl de Grey (War Office) to Russell (PM), 21 Dec. 1865. TNA, Russell Papers. PRO 30/22/15H.

Table 3.1. Average Army Size (per year) 1864-9

Year	1864	1865	1866	1867	1868	1869
Average Troop Numbers	19201	19409	22121	23217	20738	20017

Source: War Office: TNA, WO 73/6-10

Historiography

As with the idea of ‘domestication’ within the historiography of the Constabulary, the position of the British Army within Irish society has been a perennial source of interest to Irish social and military historians. Much of this research has centred on the Irish barracks system. Alan Guy has discussed the role of the hundred or more barracks throughout the country at the turn of the eighteenth century which “at first sight seem so potent a symbol of military repression [but] were in reality residential buildings, intended to afford the soldiers shelter which could not be provided in public houses as would have been the case in England.”¹³ Throughout that century, D.A. Fleming has asserted,

Soldiers together with their wives, children, servants, and other attendants that typically followed in their train were a distinctive feature of garrisons, barracks and outposts. Within these places, soldiers and their attendants became a part of the social fabric, socialising with locals in both public and private. Yet, notwithstanding their social engagement, soldiers were set apart. Their martial appearance alone provided a vivid contrast with locals.¹⁴

Similarly, Ivar McGrath’s account of the emergence of the Irish fiscal-military state includes the description of the emerging barracks system for eighteenth-century Ireland’s standing army.¹⁵ It was upon this already established network of barracks that extensions of infrastructural power were predicated in the century that followed, with the absence or unsuitability of barracks in some isolated areas proving the limiting factor that dictated long-term troop deployment patterns.

¹³ Alan J. Guy, ‘The Irish Military Establishment 1666-1776’, in *A Military History of Ireland*, ed. Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffery (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 219.

¹⁴ D. A. Fleming, *Politics and Provincial People: Sligo and Limerick, 1691-1761* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 194.

¹⁵ Charles Ivar McGrath, *Ireland and Empire 1692-1770* (London; Brookfield, VT: Pickering & Chatto Ltd, 2012) Chapters 4 & 5. See also; <http://barracks18c.ucd.ie> Curated by McGrath and www.irishgarrisons.com curated by Dr Aoife Bhreathnach who seeks to explore “how urban life in nineteenth- and twentieth- century Ireland was shaped by the thousands of soldiers who lived in the giant barracks that were built from the early 1800s onwards.”

The historiography also reflects the dual functions of the Army in nineteenth-century Ireland, namely the competing requirements of national defence and constabulary functions. Both E.M. Spiers and Virginia Crossman's chapters in *A Military History of Ireland* contribute significantly to our understanding of these roles. Spiers describes both the military and the socio-economic impact of the army by noting that while it was "deployed in small barracks across the country, these detachments were often welcomed locally as a boost to trade, as socially desirable [...] and, above all, as a bulwark for Loyalism."¹⁶ Crossman outlines the wide range of secondary functions provided by the army 'in aid of the civil power'. These included, "providing escorts for prisoners and witness and military guards at gaols and executions, protecting sheriffs, bailiffs and other functionaries, and attending public gatherings such as fairs, markets and political meetings at which breaches of the peace might be expected", all of which continued during the 1860s.¹⁷ Both Hoppen and Crossman devote considerable energy to the manner in which the army was "extensively deployed during elections throughout the century, both as a riot control force and as escorts for voters and poll books". There was, therefore, a continual ebb and flow of the army's distribution to deal with internal disorder, with the army repeatedly "being drawn into the political maelstrom" of violent outbreaks.¹⁸ As will be demonstrated below, the civil and military composition of the Flying Columns was heavily influenced by the army's electoral duties throughout the century.

Crossman, however, is quick to stress that the "importance of barracks as a visual reminder of the fragility of the rule of law in Ireland" should not be exaggerated in the early nineteenth century.¹⁹ The Irish people, she argues, "did not believe that their country was subject to military rule," but rather saw soldiers as "more efficient and impartial preservers of the peace than the local police",

¹⁶ E.M. Spiers, 'Army Organisation and Society in the Nineteenth Century', in *A Military History of Ireland*, ed. Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffery (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 342.

¹⁷ Virginia Crossman, 'The Army and Law and Order in the Nineteenth Century', in *A Military History of Ireland*, ed. Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffery (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 359.

¹⁸ Crossman, 359; K. Theodore Hoppen, *Elections, Politics, and Society in Ireland, 1832-1885* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984).

¹⁹ Virginia Crossman, 'Irish Barracks in the 1820s and 1830s: A Political Perspective', *The Irish Sword* XVII, no. 68 (1989): 210.

though one could argue that this view may have waned as the century progressed.²⁰ As Alan Skelly has demonstrated, the Army Sanitary Committee (1859) found the Dublin barracks in particular to be “crowded and unhealthy”, even relative to the civilian population, citing the Committee’s opinion that the Dublin barracks were “an excellent illustration of what ought to be avoided in barrack construction.”²¹ This notwithstanding, Jacinta Prunty’s analysis of the socio-economic impact of the Irish barracks system in the nineteenth century remains a benchmark, arguing that the “fabric of towns and cities throughout Ireland was to be profoundly affected by these changes [the century-long reforms], in the most concrete and visible ways.”²²

The more pronounced overlapping of the civil/military functions in the period immediately following the Fenian conspiracy has also received attention. David N. Haire’s essay, “In Aid of the Civil Power, 1868-90”, engages in themes similar to those of Crossman and Hoppen while arguing that, particularly in the period 1879-82 “the duties of the army immeasurably increased”, a descriptor that suggests that the period under discussion here might be viewed as a transitional phase between the two extremes.²³ Conversely, Elizabeth Muenger examined the increasing isolation of the British Army in Ireland between the Land War and 1914 from both the Irish people and its own War Office, and argued that the attempt to chart a middle ground between coercion and conciliation “aggravated rather than diminished Ireland’s turmoil.”²⁴

As employed below, the practice of tracking the deployment of troops around the country has been undertaken by Crossman, Bartlett, Fleming, and

²⁰ Crossman, 210.

²¹ Alan Ramsay Skelly, *The Victorian Army at Home - The Recruitment and Terms and Conditions of the British Regular, 1859-1899* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1977), 38.

²² Jacinta Prunty, ‘Military Barracks and Mapping in the Nineteenth Century: Sources and Issues for Irish Urban History’, in *Surveying Ireland’s Past: Multidisciplinary Essays in Honour of Anngret Simms*, ed. Jacinta Prunty, Clarke, Howard B., and Mark Hennessy (Dublin: Geography Publications, 2004), 478.

²³ David N. Haire, ‘In Aid of the Civil Power, 1868-90’, in *Ireland Under the Union: Varieties of Tension: Essays in Honour of T.W. Moody*, ed. T. W. Moody and A.J. Hawkins (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 123.

²⁴ Elizabeth A. Muenger, *The British Military Dilemma in Ireland: Occupation Politics, 1886-1914* (Gill & Macmillan Ltd, 1991)..

Prunty.²⁵ However, the disparity in size between the smallest and largest detachments of troops, particularly in comparison with the large garrisons at the Curragh and Fermoy, often makes the visual representations of army distribution problematic. Methodologically, however, the approach to be taken here is closer to that of Richard Hawkins who notes that “a merely numerical reckoning gives an incomplete picture”, and that the composition of the units employed must be factored in to gain a fuller understanding of the role of the army. The result of this process might be qualitatively different, Hawkins argues, from what might be “supposed from its paper strength.”²⁶ Here the mapping of troop deployment aims to highlight the relative changes in distribution and to give a greater sense of Mann’s “subnational variations of power” than has previously been possible, illustrating how the army intruded deeper into rural communities than it had even two years previously.

The Military Commanders

The two General Officers commanding in Ireland who served the entirety of their five-year terms between 1860 and 1870 have attracted relatively little historiographic notice compared with their civil counterparts. There is a distinct paucity of secondary material available on General Sir George Brown, and most of what is written about General Sir Hugh Rose concerns his services in the Crimea and India.²⁷ As a result it is necessary to highlight here the stark contrast in terms of ability and effectiveness that existed between the two office holders in the 1860s. The “brusque” and “boorish” General Sir George Brown shared a disciplinarian’s rigidity with his successor, General Sir Hugh Rose, whom Jenkins

²⁵ Bartlett, Thomas, ed., *Revolutionary Dublin, 1795-1801. The Letters of Francis Higgins to Dublin Castle* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004); Crossman, ‘The Army and Law and Order in the Nineteenth Century’, 362–63; Fleming, *Politics and Provincial People*, 191–92; Prunty, ‘Military Barracks and Mapping in the Nineteenth Century: Sources and Issues for Irish Urban History’, 479–91.

²⁶ Richard Hawkins, ‘An Army on Police Work, 1881-2: Ross of Bladenburg’s Memorandum’, *Irish Sword* 11, no. 43 (Winter 1973): 75.

²⁷ The exception to this is the near hagiographic description of Rose in; Burne, *Military Secretary and Aide de Camp to Sir H. Rose*. See also the brief treatment of General Rose in Jenkins, *The Fenian Problem*, 70-75.

saw as filled with “arrogance, vanity and selfishness”, but Brown could not match Rose in terms of zeal or relevant experience.²⁸

In many ways the character of Brown’s tenure in Ireland reflected that of his Lord Lieutenant, Carlisle, with Brown seeing the posting to Ireland as a minor inconvenience that required little effort on his part as he slid towards retirement. As he explained to the Duke of Cambridge towards the end of his term,

I have been most comfortable here, and consider the Command in Ireland the best position in which an old officer can be placed, [but] knowing how fully prepared for it [I am], my removal at the expiration of my five year term will occasion me no disappointment.²⁹

The Commander-in-Chief in the Horse Guards, the Duke of Cambridge, thought, perhaps a little generously, that his “old friend” General Brown filled the posting “most ably.”³⁰ Brown, already seventy-five years of age in 1865, was notorious for his “powers of adverse criticism which he was wont to express to his military superiors as to those under his command.”³¹ He had gained “a reputation for being something of a martinet as well as an inept bungler in the Crimea”, whose views on discipline might be encapsulated by his draconian assertion to his direct superior that, “some of our Majors General are much more of philanthropists than disciplinarians and are much too tender-hearted to be entrusted with discretional power.”³² A similar reticence existed when presented with technological or tactical innovations with Brown’s responses tending towards a terse, “Don’t bring that d**d nonsense here”, a retarding factor that Rose struggled to overcome.³³

Brown’s view of Fenianism was equally dismissive. While he acknowledged that Fenians were active and seemed to be “gaining an ascendancy” over the

²⁸ Jenkins, *The Fenian Problem*, 51.

²⁹ Gen Sir George Brown to Duke of Cambridge (Horse Guards), 14 Dec. 1864. Royal Archives, Windsor, Duke of Cambridge Papers (Cam). MFR 2316/17. (accessed via British Library Microfilm collections)

³⁰ Duke of Cambridge to Gen Brown, 13 Dec. & 17 Dec. 1864. National Library of Scotland (NLS), Brown Papers. MS 2860, (230-5 & 240).

³¹ William Willoughby Cole Verner, *The Military Life of H. R. H. George; Duke of Cambridge (Volume 1 1819-1871)* (London, Albermarle Street: John Murray, 1905), 268.

³² Semple, 56; Gen Brown to Duke of Cambridge. 8 Mar. 1864. NLS, Brown Papers. MS 2860, 70. Original emphasis.

³³ A.J. Semple, ‘The Fenian Infiltration of the British Army in Ireland 1864-7’ (M. Litt., Trinity College, Dublin, 1971), 90-91.

priesthood, he dismissed the potency of the threat.³⁴ They could make “some noise”, he scorned, but as “I don’t hear that they have any very influential leaders, I am not disposed to believe they can do much real mischief.”³⁵ Instead the focus of his efforts was to facilitate the arrival of the Prince of Wales in May 1865 to open the Dublin Exhibition and inspect his former regiment, the 10th Hussars, rather than to respond to the rapidly changing security landscape in Ireland.³⁶ General Brown noted in passing to the Duke that “we have not as yet been able to establish any case of tampering with the troops by Fenian agents”, a statement that reflected Brown’s lack of vigour rather than a lack of Fenian infiltration.³⁷ Semple has characterized this inaction as “highly negligent of his duty”, notwithstanding his poor health and advanced years.³⁸ Spiers echoed this assessment when he argued that Brown “grossly underestimated the extent and seriousness of the [infiltration] problem”, a difficulty that was left for his successor to deal with.³⁹

General Rose had held a wide range of Irish and imperial postings that made him eminently suited to command during the subsequent suppression of the Fenian conspiracy. Beyond the infiltration problem, he also inherited a station hamstrung by systematic internal problems and historical neglect.⁴⁰ Between 1820 and 1832 Rose had served as a major in the 92nd Regiment in Ireland and was mentioned then in dispatches for

the great gallantry he displayed in completely beating off, with only eight men, overwhelming numbers of the peasantry in the county of Leitrim, who endeavoured to take from him the gauger [customs official], [poteen] still, and prisoners whom he was escorting.⁴¹

This, and the subsequent command of a Flying Column in Tipperary designed to put down tithe and other monster meetings, saw him commanding troops on “long marches with such celerity from one meeting to another, that the dispersion of the rioters was complete.” His efficiency in marshalling the men under his command

³⁴ Brown to Duke of Cambridge. 11 Mar. 1865. BL, Cam. MFL 216/18.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ For the detailed arrangements for the Prince’s visit see; BL, Cam. 11 Apr. 1865 & 3 May. 1865.

³⁷ Brown to Duke of Cambridge. 11 Mar. 1865. BL, Cam. MFL 216/18.

³⁸ Semple, ‘Fenian Infiltration’, 56.

³⁹ Spiers, ‘Army Organisation and Society in the Nineteenth Century’, 346.

⁴⁰ Joachim Hayward Stocqueler, *Personal History of the Horse-Guards from 1750 to 1872* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1873), 207–8; Semple, ‘Fenian Infiltration’, 91.

⁴¹ George Bruce Malleson, *Essays and Lectures on Indian Historical Subjects* (Trübner, 1866), 284.

meant that his areas of command were “freed from those vast gatherings, which had caused so much alarm in England as well as in the sister island.”⁴² Such experiences appear to have informed his long-earned disdain for the use of the army in small detachments in aid of the civil power, which would later prove to be such a divisive issue.⁴³ In these activities the then Major Rose was appointed as a Commissioner of the Peace, the first of a number of intersections between civil and military positions. This process continued throughout his career, notably in his appointment to the position of Consul General in Syria in 1841, or as a peer in the House of Lords in the summer of 1866, sitting on both the government and opposition benches during the second half of his command in Ireland.⁴⁴

A diverse range of other colonial services had provided Rose with extensive knowledge of recent military, political, and diplomatic developments. His understanding of international politics appears to have been keen and was resoundingly endorsed by Lord Stratford from his time in the Crimea, where Rose served as a *Chargé d’Affaires* in the embassy in Constantinople and as Queen’s Commissioner at the Headquarters Staff of the French Army.⁴⁵ His service in the Indian Mutiny/Indian Rebellion of 1857 included the command of a Flying Column, to such acclaim that John Fortescue, historian of the nineteenth-century British army, considered him “beyond dispute the ablest commander who appeared in that field.”⁴⁶ Following the rebellion, Rose was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army (which had been maintained as a separate organization), answering to the Secretary of State rather than the army command at the Horse Guards, a civil-military tension that would have relevance for Ireland. In this role he was tasked with reforming the Indian Army’s structures in the extremely testing post-Mutiny environment. Thus a combination of his Irish, European, Middle-Eastern, and Indian experiences made Rose eminently qualified to command in Ireland in the second half of the 1860s. However, Wodehouse noted

⁴² Malleon, 284.

⁴³ See particularly, Rose to Naas, 29 Dec. 1866. BL, Rose Papers. MS ADD 42,823, 69-71. Although in his attitude was somewhat nostalgic: “When I was a Subaltern...”

⁴⁴ Malleon, *Essays and Lectures on Indian Historical Subjects*, 294–96.

⁴⁵ Malleon, 290–94.

⁴⁶ J.W. Fortescue, *A History of the British Army*, vol. XIII (London: Macmillan Press, 1930), 394; Semple, ‘Fenian Infiltration’, 91.

the negative personal toll Rose's imperial experiences had taken commenting that he was looking "worn and tired, but not more than I expected after 7 years in India."⁴⁷

While it may be the case that Rose was appointed to Ireland specifically as a reward for excellent imperial counterinsurgency services, no direct documentary evidence survives of this, although some hints to this effect remain. Many such appointments were initially mooted in the regular meetings between the Secretary of State for War and the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, but no minutes of such meetings survive, if they were taken at all. Other avenues of exploration are similarly closed because of "the lack of surviving papers relating to the work of the Military Secretary."⁴⁸ In his acceptance of the post, however, Rose commented that he was flattered to assume the Irish command. This was particularly the case as both Lord de Grey [Sec. of State for War], and the government "were fully agreed with Your Royal Highness in making the recommendation to the Queen."⁴⁹ It is fair to assume that Rose's counterinsurgency track record featured heavily in this recommendation. The Irish command was one, noted Rose, which "I prefer to all others."⁵⁰ Officers serving under Rose in India were equally effusive about his abilities. General Cunynghame, who would assume command of the Dublin Division under General Rose, wrote to the Duke of Cambridge in terms that reflected the diligence and attention to detail of Lord Lieutenant Wodehouse:

There can be no doubt but that the immense activity and constant personal supervision into every department of the army which has been exercised by Sir Hugh Rose has had the most beneficial effect in the improvement of the Army both British and Native in every branch and the increased knowledge of the officers regarding all their duties is most satisfactory.⁵¹

A further attribute, beyond his reforming skills, that Cunynghame was quick to endorse, was Rose's meritocratic approach to the choice of staff officers. These officers, responsible for the day-to-day administrative, operations, and logistical needs of the army, "have been selected for their merits almost invariably", and this

⁴⁷ Wodehouse, *The Journal of John Wodehouse First Earl of Kimberley, for 1862-1902*, 163.

⁴⁸ Ian F. W. Beckett, 'The Annual Confidential Report and Promotion in the Late Victorian Army', *British Journal for Military History* 1, no. 1 (October 2014): 16; Harpin, 'The British War Office', 7-20.

⁴⁹ Rose to Duke of Cambridge, 18 Dec. 1864. BL, Cam. MFR 2316/17.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Gen Cunynghame to Duke of Cambridge, 5 Nov. 1864. BL, Cam. MRF 2316/17.

would be reflected in his subsequent choice of commanders of the Irish Flying Columns. The only direct comparison between Rose's Indian and Irish service came from the *Army and Navy Gazette* who suggested that "Sir Hugh Rose is about the very last man 'a Fenian army' has much to expect from, and he would not be likely to act with less vigour in Ireland than he did in Central India."⁵² As Jill Bender has noted, the tone of this article was well understood within the British media, with Punch's "Dr. Bull" commenting that, "I treated a somewhat similar case to this very successfully in India; leave him to me."⁵³

Figure 3.2. 'Physic for Fenians'. Punch Magazine, 8 December 1866



PHYSIC FOR FENIANS.

ERIN. "I'M AFRAID, DOCTOR DEAR, HIS SYMPTOMS ARE GETTING DANGEROUS."

DR. BULL. "HA! I SEE! I TREATED A SOMEWHAT SIMILAR CASE TO THIS VERY SUCCESSFULLY IN INDIA; LEAVE HIM TO ME."

Support for Rose, however, was not universal. One of the most pressing objections to his appointment to the Irish command was due to the diplomatic, rather than the military character of his postings. Rose's detractors accused him of

⁵² *Army and Navy Gazette*, 23 Sept., 1865.

⁵³ Jill Bender, *The 1857 Indian Uprising and the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 139.

“quasi-diplomatic” tendencies, for he had never actually held regimental command.⁵⁴ Writing to the Duke of Cambridge, Charles Wood, Secretary of State for India, could only say “how glad I am that Sir H Rose is coming away”, particularly because his actions had resulted in, “that most undesirable state of things of having the government of India and the Commander-in-Chief there in perpetual collision”, a pattern that would continue to Ireland.⁵⁵ This gives further justification to Jenkins’ assertion that the result of Rose’s appointment to Ireland was a conflict between him and both Liberal and Conservative administrations that amounted to “an acrimonious test of wills and influence with the civil authority.”⁵⁶ Perhaps the clearest insight into Rose’s begrudging interaction with civil government was betrayed by him when he wrote to General Tombs of his opinion of the Irish Viceroy: “I like Lord Wodehouse”, admitted Rose, “he is very frank and straightforward and *never interferes*. Everything one could wish.”⁵⁷

The degree to which Rose’s Indian service influenced his actions in Ireland is difficult to assess. As will be demonstrated, Irish Flying Columns were formed in much the same way that he had operated them in India, but this influence permeated the army in other ways. Keen to harmonise aspect of army administration, Rose wrote to Major-General Showers of the Bengal Infantry (who had served under him during the Indian Mutiny), advising him that he would “by Berne send to you a copy of the Dublin garrison orders” in a manner that would bring uniformity to the service.⁵⁸ The reciprocal flow of Indian practice into Irish training was evident in the aftermath of the rising when Rose instructed that orders be issued “founded on my Indian instructions as to drill and movements.”⁵⁹ This trend was further reinforced when Rose wrote to the Duke of Cambridge immediately on his arrival to highlight the improvements in the professionalism and discipline that he hoped to instil in his senior officers. “I will give directions to

⁵⁴ Charles Wood (Indian Office) to Duke of Cambridge, 21 Oct. 1864. Cam. MFR 2316/17. (Wood was later Viscount Halifax),

⁵⁵ Charles Wood to Duke of Cambridge, 16 Dec. 1864, Cam. MFR 2316/17.

⁵⁶ Jenkins, *The Fenian Problem*, 73.

⁵⁷ Rose to General Tombs, 15 Oct., 1865. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,821, 110. My emphasis.

⁵⁸ Rose to Major General Showers, 15 Oct., 1865. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,821, 110. “Berne” is, presumably, Owen Tudor Berne, General Rose’s *aide-de-camp*, and later biographer.

⁵⁹ Rose to Col. Mackenzie, 24 Jul., 1867. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,824, 122.

the Headquarters staff transacting business in the morning *in uniform*”, he informed the Duke, adding, “They always did so in India, even in Simla.”⁶⁰

Not only did Rose frame his actions in Ireland in Indian terms, but he applied the same kinds of comparison to the potential insurgents. Drawing clear links between his perception of the Indian Mutiny and Fenianism, he wrote,

the would-be red Republicans [Fenians] occupy a large share of the time not devoted to sleep. They are in many respects like our sable Indian friends, credulous, impassive, imaginative, ungracious, clever, but without a particle of the speciality to which they both aspire and for which they both are consequently unfit – self-government and self-administration.⁶¹

Rose also sought to apply the same punishments for military disaffection in Ireland as he had notoriously done with the Sepoys in India. Writing privately to Col. North MP he asserted that, “I was always from the first for trying the soldiers accused of Fenianism [...] traitors cannot be awarded penal servitude in the same way that civilians can. The Mutiny Act gives great power in India”, a power he was keen to extend to Ireland.⁶² While it may be too much to assert an overwhelming Indian influence on Irish military thinking in the 1860s, what is certain is that Rose brought his Indian experience to bear on Irish issues with far more energy than had Brown transferred his prior expertise as an Adjutant General. This is not a novel observation, but as will be demonstrated below the scale of the structural and tactical innovations that Rose imported have been underdeveloped in other works.⁶³

The Army and Election Duty

The army’s use as an extension of the Executive’s infrastructural power is best seen in its deployment throughout the country during elections. K.T. Hoppen has analysed this, but his approach centres on the electoral violence itself, whereas here we will deal with the manner in which military force was composed to provide support to the civil power as a precursor to the later formation of ‘Flying

⁶⁰ Rose to Duke of Cambridge, 23 Jul., 1865. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,821, 6.

⁶¹ Rose to Sir Grant Hope, 21 Dec., 1865. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,821, 210-11.

⁶² Rose to Col. North MP (Strictly Private), 2 Feb., 1866. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,821, 305. Partially cited in Bender, *The 1857 Indian Uprising and the British Empire*, 136.

⁶³ Bender, 132-39; Townshend, *Political Violence in Ireland*, 89.

Columns'.⁶⁴ At elections the army's duties consisted of escorting voters to the polls and suppressing any mobs that might appear. The army's commanders universally resented election duty. The Duke of Cambridge complained to General Brown that he wished "we could avoid sending troops those long distances in this severe weather in order to look after the people at these Irish Elections, but I am afraid we cannot do so, as we should get into great trouble if heads were broken."⁶⁵ Most problematically army escorts, by necessity, required the use of small detachments at the limited, but growing, number of polling places for county elections in the 1850s and 1860s.

Although Hoppen's differentiation between trends in English and Irish electoral violence has recently been re-evaluated, with English electoral violence being "more widespread and general than generally believed," the contrasting role played by the army in response to such violence has not.⁶⁶ In Britain the requisitioning of the county Yeomanry could be used as a buffer between police escorts and full military intervention.⁶⁷ The lack of such a buffer in Ireland resulted in the faster recourse to the army for support. As Hoppen eloquently puts it, "in England troops marched out of towns as polling took place, in Ireland they marched in."⁶⁸ This might be broadened to consider the imperial practices. By the mid-1860s in Canada "the employment of troops at election times ceased", though on four occasions prior to this, "military intervention led to loss of life."⁶⁹ This suggests that Ireland's dependence on the British Army at election times bucked both English and broader imperial trends.

⁶⁴ Hoppen, *Elections, Politics, and Society in Ireland, 1832-1885*; K. Theodore Hoppen, 'Grammars of Electoral Violence in Nineteenth-Century England and Ireland', *English Historical Review* 109, no. 432 (June 1994): 597-620.

⁶⁵ Duke of Cambridge to George Brown, 16 Feb., 1865. NLS, Brown Papers. MS 2861, (37).

⁶⁶ Justin Wasserman and Edwin Jaggard, 'Electoral Violence in Mid Nineteenth-Century England and Wales', *Historical Research* 80, no. 207 (February 2007): 124.

⁶⁷ For more on the civil functions of the Yeomanry in Victorian Britain see; Oskar Teichman, 'The Yeomanry as Aid to the Civil Power, 1795-1867. Part II (1831-67)', *Journal of the Society of Army Historical Research* 19 (1940): 127-43.

⁶⁸ Hoppen, *Elections, Politics, and Society in Ireland, 1832-1885*, 415.

⁶⁹ David Facey-Crowther, 'The British Army and Aid to the Civil Power in British North America, 1832-1871', *Journal of the Society of Army Historical Research* 93, no. 376 (Winter 2015): 321-31. These elections were: Montreal 1832 & 1844, the Gavazzi Riot of 1853, and the Newfoundland Riots of 1861.

Two specific examples illustrate the range of duties undertaken in the mid-1860s. The Tralee by-election of February 1865 demonstrates the disproportionate allocation of resources that so frustrated General Brown, where the actions of “the O’Donoghue and his partisans” required the deployment of 500 infantry to supplement the 300 Constabulary already allocated.⁷⁰ This deployment, and continual calls for reinforcement from alarmed magistrates, was required to protect a district in which there were only 200 voters and in which both candidates were from different hues of the same political party. In all, Brown wondered whether,

rather than incur the expense, and subject people to the trouble and inconvenience of maintaining order amongst them at this season of the year, I should feel disposed to leave them to settle their affairs, in their own way and... cut each other’s throats if they liked.⁷¹

Victory for the popular candidate resulted in the withdrawal “without any riots or serious disturbance” of the 10th Hussars, with a quick return to normal law and order practices immediately thereafter.⁷²

A second, more contentious example of the pressures experienced by both the civil and military administrations can be seen in the response to the riots at the by-election in Dungarvan in late December 1866. In anticipation of the election, Lord Waterford wrote to the Chief Secretary to request the presence of “500 infantry, two full troops of cavalry and a large force of police” each for both Carrick and Dungarvan.⁷³ The logic behind this seemingly overwhelmingly large request for military support was revealed when he confessed that, “If the feeling of insecurity gains ground many will be deterred from voting. It is therefore important that strengths should be shown without delay.”⁷⁴ The deployment that resulted was described by Naas as “in fact a little army”, consisting in Waterford City alone of, “4 companies of infantry, 3 troops of Cavalry, ½ a battery of artillery and nearly 150 men of [the] constabulary.” If required, the “man of war in the river can offer ... the assistance of 250 armed men and four resident magistrates will be also ordered to attend.” This illustrates not only the volume of forces that the

⁷⁰ Brown to Duke of Cambridge, 13 Feb. 1865. BL, Cam. MFR 2316/18.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Brown to Duke of Cambridge, 18 Feb. 1865. BL, Cam. MFR 2316/18.

⁷³ Lord Waterford to Naas, 25 Dec., 1866. NLI, Mayo Papers, 43,835/7.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

government was prepared to deploy, but also the way in which different branches of state power were expected to cooperate with each other in this duty.⁷⁵

Two deaths occurred as a result of the deployment to Dungarvan due primarily to the lack of clear communication between the civil and military commanders of the force.⁷⁶ One death, judged an aggravated manslaughter, resulted from a mob that rescued a prisoner from police custody near Cappagh, between Cappoquin and Dungarvan. The second, however, was of a “brutal and most savage character”, and was more problematic for Rose and Naas because it came about “by a stab of a lance, by one of 16 of the 12th Lancers, who unlawfully charged down the quay.”⁷⁷ While the *Examiner* doubted whether the charge of murder “would be legally deserving of that epithet,” it was reported in such a manner as to indicate that the lancer in question had disobeyed the orders of his commanding officer.⁷⁸ Early conflicting reports laid the blame firmly at the door of Mr Warburton, the Resident Magistrate in command of the column. Rose felt Warburton had not only poorly composed his force by favouring cavalry over infantry or foot police, but he had “mismanaged matters” and “lost his head” in the excitement.⁷⁹

Subsequently, increasing blame for the “Dungarvan homicides” fell on the officer commanding the detachment, Major Wombwell, whose evidence to the coroner’s inquest differed “entirely in sense and words from the official report to Head Quarters.”⁸⁰ As Rose explained to Abercorn,

In his official Report Major W[ombwell] expressly says “The Magistrate requested me to bring some men and clear the corners of the bridge and a portion of the Quay”. Now it was in doing this, in obeying this order of the Magistrate that the two men were very unfortunately, killed. Major W in his

⁷⁵ Naas to Lord Waterford, 27 Dec., 1866. NLI, Mayo Papers, 43,835/7.

⁷⁶ Alan O’Day, *Reactions to Irish Nationalism, 1865-1914* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 1987), 149 (Footnote 44). *Freeman’s Journal*, 31 Dec. 1866.

⁷⁷ *Waterford County election. Copy of the verdict of the coroner’s inquest on Mr. Keily, killed in Dungarvan at the last Waterford election.* House of Commons Return, 1867, No 165, 1.

⁷⁸ *Cork Examiner*, 4 Feb. 1867.

⁷⁹ Rose to Comte de Jarnac (private), 30 Dec. 1866 & Rose to Duke of Cambridge, 4 Jan. 1867. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,823, 74-6 & 81-5.

⁸⁰ Rose to Col. L Smyth (Curzon - Military Secretary), 18 Jan. 1867. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42.823, 113-5.

Report quite exculpates his men, whilst in his evidence he inculpates them.⁸¹

The salient difference was that in Major Wombwell's initial report he had insisted that the Magistrate had given the order to "charge" rather than "clear" the crowd along the quays. In terms of the guidelines for troops supporting the civil power, this left the military, and particularly the soldiers, directly responsible for the ensuing deaths. This experience reinforced for Rose the importance of having reliable Resident Magistrates and Army officers operating together effectively in such detachments, a lesson that was quickly learned and applied just six weeks later.⁸²

The Process of Reform

While Bender is accurate in her recent description of Rose's desire to reform the army in Ireland for which he "drew from his Indian experience", her focus on "military leadership and methods of discipline" significantly underplays the scale of the reforms. This section will examine both the longer-term reform of the army's transport, supply and commissariat functions, and the shorter-term reorganization of the army implemented by Wodehouse and Rose upon their arrival in Ireland. The reform of the supply functions, often taking place beyond the reach of the Irish Executive, determined the flexibility of the army in the field, whereas the shorter-term reforms, from November 1864 onwards, addressed the results of the neglect of the strategic considerations evident in the system of garrisoning in Ireland.

Perhaps the most obvious example of reform of the Irish military infrastructure was the construction of the Curragh camp in Kildare. This had its origins in the immediate necessity to train and accommodate troops en route to the Crimea in 1854, but the camp faced the possibility of becoming immediately obsolete after the signing of the Treaty of Paris in March 1856. The camp's future was uncertain, until a plan by Colonel Lugard (the camp's original designer) for a

⁸¹ Rose to Abercorn, 20 Jan. 1867. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,823, (121-2).

⁸² For further details and statements see, NLI, Mayo Papers. MS 11,210/2.

camp of a “more permanent nature” was adopted.⁸³ Dan Harvey has described the intention behind the consolidation of the camp as aiming to produce a “cohesive effect from all arms (infantry, artillery and cavalry) and it was training at the Curragh plains that helped the British army to achieve this.”⁸⁴ The installation of an electric telegraph at the camp in 1859 greatly helped to integrate the regiments encamped there with the broader defensive infrastructure.⁸⁵ Similarly, the nearby Curragh siding constructed in 1856 made the adjacent camp perfectly placed to exploit the expanding nationwide rail network.⁸⁶

For his part, Rose was immediately impressed with the camp. He noted to General Tombs that there “never was such ground for drill, manoeuvring and instruction as the Curragh. A magnificent plain of the finest turf, several miles long and broad with undulations favouring the making of troops of all arms.”⁸⁷ Others, such as the MP for Queen’s County felt that “the crown had no rights whatever on the Curragh, and the move was an atrocious invasion of public property”, demonstrating the tension that existed surrounding the development of the camp.⁸⁸ This resulted in a commission of enquiry to adjudicate between local landowners, the historic claims to land usage on the Curragh, and the pressing needs of the military. The result of the Curragh Commission, which took place concurrently with the Fenian rising, was to transfer authority over the area to the War Department from 1868 onwards. This facilitated the further reform and training of the army. Regardless of how impressive its garrisons were, however, this military power was of little counterinsurgency value if it could not be speedily brought to bear when and where it was most required, a concern that occupied much of Rose’s attention in the build-up to the rising.

⁸³ Con Costello, *A Most Delightful Station: The British Army on the Curragh of Kildare, Ireland, 1855-1922* (Cork: Collins Press, 1996), 25.

⁸⁴ Dan Harvey, *Soldiers of the Short Grass: A History of the Curragh Camp* (Newbridge: Merrion Press, 2016), 18.

⁸⁵ Costello, *A Most Delightful Station: The British Army on the Curragh of Kildare, Ireland, 1855-1922*, 39.

⁸⁶ Costello, 15.

⁸⁷ Rose to Major General Tombs, 15 Oct., 1865. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,821, 110.

⁸⁸ Costello, *A Most Delightful Station: The British Army on the Curragh of Kildare, Ireland, 1855-1922*, 47-65.

Commissariat, Supply, and Transport

The supply functions of the army are generally considered to be the least glamorous and least visible component of an army's management, but are also the function upon which all other successful applications of force are predicated. Ireland, however, was in a particularly poor state of organization at the start of the period under consideration. A detailed assessment of the functioning of the Irish Commissariat during the 1840s was made more difficult due to its anomalous administrative position. The Duke of Wellington highlighted this when he criticized the Irish Commissariat, noting that

it becomes necessary to point out the details which belong to the [Irish Commissariat] Department, agreeably to the regulations for Field or Colonial Service and which form no part of our present employment in Ireland. Neither is the duty, here exactly similar to that in England.⁸⁹

Here, the nature of these deficiencies and the manner of their reform will be more closely interrogated.

As Crossman has demonstrated, the obvious deficiencies inherent in the Young Irelanders' organization "helped to conceal weaknesses within the government forces."⁹⁰ This pessimism was echoed by the former Chief Secretary and soldier, Sir Henry Hardinge, who in August 1848 bemoaned the state of the military transport system as "hopeless" and warned that "in three-quarters of the country we are in an enemy's country".⁹¹ While Crossman's analysis focused on the difficulties that might be expected to arise with the Constabulary coordinating with the army, here it will be demonstrated how infrastructural and organizational difficulties that hindered the army as a whole should also be added to the list of hidden weaknesses. As noted, during the 1848 rebellion the Army was dispersed around the country in relatively small detachments (see below page 185). The Army was regularly encamped in Dublin and witnessed the frequent "assembly of

⁸⁹ Memo #2 of C-in-C Duke of Wellington to PM Lord John Russell, 1 Nov. 1848. TNA, HO 45/2369.

⁹⁰ Crossman, *Politics, Law and Order in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, 86.

⁹¹ Report of H. Hardinge, 6 Aug., 1848. Bodleian Library, Clarendon Dep. Irish Box 16. Quoted in Kinealy, *Repeal and Revolution*, 203.

troops in case of famine-based insurrection”, but the Duke of Wellington doubted the Army’s ability to transfer effectively to the field.⁹²

The peculiarities of the Irish Commissariat resulted in considerable difficulties in the formation of rapid reaction forces. The provision of essential items such as “Military Stores, Provisions, Fuel, ammunition, Camp Equipage, or in other words military means of movement or transport” fell between the Irish Commissariat and the Ordnance Board.⁹³ Writing to Prime Minister Lord Russell, the Duke of Wellington explained that “events which have occurred since [the 1848 Rebellion] in Ireland have shown clearly that at the very moment at which means of transport are necessary in order to enable the troops to move to overcome Rebellion and Insurrection”, those same means of transport are “in the hands of those against whom the troops are about to move or their friends, allies, or fellow conspirators.”⁹⁴ The lack of independent army transport provision, therefore, directly inhibited the ability of the Army to cope in the event of a large-scale, countrywide rebellion, and demonstrated the limits of the state’s infrastructural power.

The experience of 1848 led the Duke of Wellington to comment that, without systemic reform, no General Officer “could assert that he had the means of putting a column in movement.”⁹⁵ He described a reactive situation where,

In speaking, therefore, of employing moveable columns in Ireland in the present state of the service, the main requisite of transport is altogether deficient and it has to be commenced in the hurry and anxiety of the moment without any preparation or any reasonable encouragement to warrant success.⁹⁶

One example of such systemic problems was that the Commissariat Department, originally a civil branch, which was responsible for ‘supply’.⁹⁷ These functions were subsequently transferred to the newly formed Military Train that had

⁹² Hew Strachan, *The Reform of the British Army 1830-54: Wellington’s Legacy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 162.

⁹³ Memo #1 of C-in-C Duke of Wellington to PM Lord John Russell, 1 Nov. 1848. TNA, HO 45/2369.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ Memo #2 of C-in-C Duke of Wellington to PM Lord John Russell, 1 Nov. 1848. TNA, HO 45/2369.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ The word “Supply” here technically denotes the “the provision, custody and issue of food, forage, and consumable supplies” – see Goodenough, Chapter XIV.

replaced the Land Transport Corps raised during the Crimean War.⁹⁸ Such splitting of responsibilities virtually guaranteed that the “sudden impositions of a duty and an organization so extensive in time of danger and insurrection must be more or less complete failures.”⁹⁹ This made the coordination of the two branches particularly difficult, and left the then Adjutant General, Sir George Brown, to comment in 1850 that, “there was no commissariat ready or fit for the field.”¹⁰⁰

Reforms, when they came, emerged from a series of military failures in the Empire, and were partly addressed during the Crimean War. Defeat in Afghanistan in 1840-41, and the threat of invasion by the French in 1847-48 and again in 1852 served as the backdrop against which many of these reforms were implemented. By 1854 the division of the Board of Ordnance between the Royal Navy and the Army represented what Strachan has described as, “the triumph of ideas bandied around since the early 1830s.”¹⁰¹ The Commissariat and Transport staffs were absorbed into the General Staff, with the older system being “permitted to lapse.”¹⁰² From 1858, the Treasury finally agreed to cede financial control of the Commissariat and other administrative departments to the War Office, which resulted in the need to

abolish the Ordnance Board which had been a separate entity, and for three new departments to be formed under the Secretary of State, i.e. the Ordnance Department, the Finance Department, both entirely civilian, and a combined Commissariat.¹⁰³

These reforms had not been fully completed by the time of the Fenian scare, but it might be noted that Rose’s chairmanship of the Army Transport Committee (1867) suggests that the experience of the British Army in Ireland both benefited from and contributed to the reform process.

⁹⁸ William Howley Goodenough, *The Army Book for the British Empire, A Record of the Development and Present Composition of the Military Forces and Their Duties in War and Peace* (London, 1893), 257.

⁹⁹ Memo #2 of C-in-C Duke of Wellington to PM Ld John Russell, 1 Nov. 1848. TNA, HO 45/2369.

¹⁰⁰ Strachan, ‘The Early Victorian Army and the Nineteenth-Century Revolution in Government’, 797.

¹⁰¹ Strachan, 790.

¹⁰² Goodenough, *The Army Book for the British Empire, A Record of the Development and Present Composition of the Military Forces and Their Duties in War and Peace*, 335.

¹⁰³ Graham Crew, *The Royal Army Service Corps* (London: Leo Cooper Ltd., 1970), 44.

These structural reforms ensured that a closer coordination and management of all supply functions could be attained under the auspices of the increasingly important office of the Adjutant General. As Goodenough has argued, the fact that these functions now fell to the General Staff meant that “the new system tended to spread through the Army at large a knowledge of these duties so that at times of need a greater number of officers would be found capable of undertaking them than heretofore.”¹⁰⁴ Rose was clearly supportive of this consolidation of roles when he wrote, “I think that there should be only one responsibility, consequently only one Dept. of Supply, which would of course be the Commissariat; for the reason the supply of barracks would be under the Commissariat, but nothing more.”¹⁰⁵ By 1865, the *Army and Navy Gazette* concluded that the non-combatant aspects of the Army establishment in Cork was now “represented by an efficient commissariat department”, in stark contrast to the situation two decades earlier.¹⁰⁶

A perfect example of spreading Commissariat competency is seen at the end of 1866, when Brigadier-General Sir William McMurdo was appointed to the command of a Dublin Division, and later briefly to Cork. McMurdo was one of the Army’s foremost logisticians. Immediately following his tenure as Assistant Adjutant General in Dublin from May 1854 to January 1855, he was transferred to the Crimea where he was appointed Director-General of the newly formed Land Transport Corps and of the Military Train that succeeded it.¹⁰⁷ Described as a “brilliant staff officer and a practical soldier”, McMurdo was appointed as Inspector-General of the English-based Volunteer Force. Only eighteen months before arriving in Ireland he was appointed Colonel of the Engineer and Railway Volunteer Staff Corps.¹⁰⁸ Historian of the Royal Army Service Corps, Gerard Williams, acknowledged General McMurdo’s ability by noting that he “had achieved a considerable reputation as an expert, albeit a layman, in the rapidly developing transport industry,” precisely the expertise that would offer potential

¹⁰⁴ Goodenough, *The Army Book for the British Empire, A Record of the Development and Present Composition of the Military Forces and Their Duties in War and Peace*, 336.

¹⁰⁵ Rose to Col. Somerset, 21 July, 1866. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,822, 162-3.

¹⁰⁶ *Army and Navy Gazette*, 30 Sept., 1865.

¹⁰⁷ E. M. Lloyd, DNB entry “McMurdo, Sir William Montagu Scott”

¹⁰⁸ Crew, *The Royal Army Service Corps*.

benefits in the formation of Flying Columns in Ireland in the 1867.¹⁰⁹ Thus over the period of two decades, and particularly in the months leading up to the 1867 rising, the army became indisputably more capable of exercising the state's infrastructural power. This contrasted sharply with the lack of structural soundness within the Fenian organization, which bemused the *Irish Times* sufficiently for it to argue that if "a conspiracy should be formed... without arms, artillery, commissariat, or stores, [its success] is almost incredible."¹¹⁰

Military Contracting

The progressive centralization of imperial supply functions saw the switch of the contracting and tendering processes from Dublin to London. This occurred at a time when military budgets spent on "wars of conquest and pacification, military works and permanent garrisons" had increased and where "as consumers, the military was an economic force and the barracks a place of civilian as well as military employment."¹¹¹ Therefore, attempts to reverse the impact of some of these reforms provide a useful insight into the otherwise invisible impact on Ireland of the centralization of imperial defence.

Throughout the Victorian period there was a move towards transforming the army from a "collection of regiments" into a more homogenous, standardized force.¹¹² Thus from 1855 the procurement of army uniforms and related day-to-day items was centralized through the establishment of the Army Clothing Department. Up until that point regimental colonels had acted as "virtually the contractors for their regiments" by outsourcing supply to firms of their choosing, "with profit skimmed off the top."¹¹³ The centralization of this process to the Army Clothing Depôt at Pimlico, completed in 1863, resulted in a major drop in earnings

¹⁰⁹ G. Williams and Michael Williams, *Citizen Soldiers of the Royal Engineers Transportation and Movements and the Royal Army Service Corps, 1859 to 1965* (Aldershot: Institution of the Royal Corps of Transport, 1969), 7.

¹¹⁰ *Irish Times* 19 Sept. 1865.

¹¹¹ Peter Burroughs, 'Imperial Defense and the Victorian Army', *Journal of Imperial & Commonwealth History* 15, no. 1 (September 1986): 63. Prunty, 'Military Barracks and Mapping in the Nineteenth Century: Sources and Issues for Irish Urban History', 478.

¹¹² Gwyn Harries-Jenkins, *The Army in Victorian Society* (Hull: University of Hull Press, 1993), 10.

¹¹³ Goodenough, *The Army Book for the British Empire, A Record of the Development and Present Composition of the Military Forces and Their Duties in War and Peace*, 435.

for Irish producers, enough, at least, to warrant petitioning the Irish government for redress.

Early in his tenure, Wodehouse outlined his administration's goals, primarily developing the prosperity of Ireland.¹¹⁴ To this end he received a deputation in January 1865 headed by P.S. Shanley, President of the United Trades Association (UTA).¹¹⁵ Shanley pointed out that a significant discrepancy had emerged in the way in which contracts for the army were tendered for to such a degree that since 1855 "certain articles required for the army are not advertised in Ireland as heretofore," and he went on to enumerate 150 items.¹¹⁶ This reflected "the amount of injustice thereby done to this country", resulting in serious loss to its manufacturers and artisans. The perceived injustice was compounded by Shanley's claims that such items could not only be produced more cheaply in Ireland, but sourcing them locally would defray transportation costs, stressing that, "what we ask is merely an equality for our production."¹¹⁷

Wodehouse wrote directly to the Secretary of State for War, displaying partiality for the complainants saying, "If they have a grievance (which as far as I can see really appears to be the case) I am sure you will remedy it."¹¹⁸ Earl de Grey replied that if the War Office could attain "the best article we can at the lowest price compatible with the required degree of excellence, I should be delighted to adopt them, if possible."¹¹⁹ He feared, however, that "your subjects really want us to take inferior articles from them", and noted the financial savings which had accrued from abolishing the "separate establishment of Receiving and Issuing Officers, Inspectors, and Viewers, to serve the receipt of Articles equal to the

¹¹⁴ *Dundalk Democrat*, 3 Dec., 1864; *The Nation*, 28 Jan., 1865. *Freeman's Journal*, 11 Jan., 1865.

¹¹⁵ The UTA was an organization founded in Dublin in 1863 at a time when "artisans felt their interest to be under threat" from the increase in Department Stores and mass-produced goods. See, R.V. Comerford, 'Ireland 1850-70: Post-Famine and Mid-Victorian', in *A New History of Ireland, Volume V: Ireland Under the Union, 1: 1801-1870: 5*, ed. W. E. Vaughan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 379.

¹¹⁶ P.S. Hanley to Wodehouse, 30 Jan., 1865. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4018, 100.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ Wodehouse to de Grey, 6 Feb., 1865. Bodl., Kim. Ms Eng C 4019, 16.

¹¹⁹ de Grey to Wodehouse, 4 Mar., 1865. Bodl., Kim. Ms Eng C 4021, 1-2.

patterns” in Ireland.¹²⁰ An accompanying memorandum suggested that Irish manufacturers hoping to tender for supplies to the army should engage “a competent agent in London to report upon the articles required, to deliver the supplies, and to receive back the rejections”, though it might be observed that this would have resulted in additional costs to Irish manufacturers when considered against their English counterparts.¹²¹

Beyond Wodehouse’s efforts with army contracting, Rose’s reform of the Army in Ireland proceeded apace. His efforts focussed on three areas: improved military discipline and training, the regularization of manpower distribution, and resistance to the constabularization of the army. Rose’s personal correspondence reveals the contempt with which he held the quality of training of his troops coming under his command. Writing to an old friend, Captain Ravenhill, he expressed incredulity at the fact that when he “asked for any system of military instruction at the Curragh, not one could be produced.”¹²² He outlined how “a General Officer who has been here four years assured me that, till I came, he had never seen a 2nd Line [...] which is the *sine qua non* of an order of battle.” Further irregularities could have been outlined but he chose not to “continue the *et ceteras*, but they are numerous.”¹²³ By mid 1867, Rose explained to the Inspector-General of Cavalry that he had instituted twice weekly field days at the Curragh for the instruction of the officers, one tactical, the other strategic, to help them “learn the correct and rapid performance of every evolution”, thereby dramatically improving their command skills.¹²⁴ These improvements were not specifically aimed at destroying Fenianism, but must have been contributory to the overall outcome.

¹²⁰ Memorandum on “Irish Suppliers”, War Office, Authored by Thomas Howell. 27 Feb. 1865. Enclosure with Earl de Grey to Ld Wodehouse 4 Mar. 1865. Bodl., Kim. Ms Eng C 4021.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Rose to Captain Ravenhill, 1 Sept. 1865. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,821, 33. Original emphasis.

¹²³ Ibid. Original emphasis.

¹²⁴ Rose to Inspector-General of Cavalry, Lord George Paget, 16 Aug. 1867. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,824, 139-40.

Depot Battalions

One of the most pressing matters for both Rose and Wodehouse was the problem presented by the Depot Battalions, which represented almost 35 per cent of the paper strength of the Army in Ireland (Figure 3.3). Such battalions presented a unique set of challenges for military administrators because, unlike a Regiment of the Line, a “Depot Battalion” consisted of older or invalided soldiers, combined with new recruits awaiting drafting to their regiments.¹²⁵ As early as the winter of 1860, General Brown had written to the Duke of Cambridge disparagingly about the inefficiency of the depot system for which the Duke himself was responsible. Brown wrote that he had inspected “seven of *your precious* depot battalions [and that this experience had] not tended to improve my opinion of them as Military Institutions.”¹²⁶ By 1865 these depots were in line for rationalization as well as centralization consistent with the political reforming prerogatives of the War Office’s policy of imperial contraction. The Duke warned Brown that they must “be prepared for some considerable change” in the way the depots were envisioned to operate.¹²⁷

Figure 3.3. Composition of the Army in Ireland, November 1864

	Officers	Sergeants	Trumpets & Drums	Rank and File	Total without Officers	Total All Ranks	% of Force
Royal Artillery	62	111	15	1600	1726	1788	9.10%
Royal Engineers	20	6	2	78	86	106	0.50%
Cavalry (6 Regts)	204	247	51	3037	3335	3539	18%
Military Train (6 Btns)	17	23	5	258	286	303	1.50%
Infantry (9 Regts)	344	423	187	6172	6782	7126	36.20%
Infantry (9 Depot Btns)	418	568	205	5607	6380	6798	34.60%
Total	1065	1378	465	16752	18595	19660	

Source: Military Memorandum to Lord Wodehouse, November 1864. Bodl., Kim. Ms Eng C 4061

Although Wodehouse had little familiarity with military matters, it was immediately obvious, even to him, that the depots offered very little utility. Within weeks of his arrival in Ireland he wrote to the Secretary of State for War to question whether “it might be advisable to abolish the Depot at Belfast and to station a regiment there?”, as it was widely held that “there ought always to be a

¹²⁵ Semple asserts the existence of only 5 depot battalions, but as Table 3.3 indicates, there were 9 such battalions, located in 5 locations. See Semple, 16.

¹²⁶ General Sir George Brown to Duke of Cambridge, Nov. 1860, reproduced in: Verner, *The Military Life of H. R. H. George; Duke of Cambridge (Volume 1 1819-1871)*, 268. Original emphasis.

¹²⁷ Duke of Cambridge to General Sir George Brown, 13 Dec. 1864. NLS, Brown Papers. MS 2860, 230-5.

regiment at Belfast.”¹²⁸ The reason this had not happened previously was that there was insufficient barrack accommodation to permit a Regiment of the Line to be stationed in Belfast, an infrastructural problem that would be echoed later throughout the country. Rose noted how unsuited the depot battalions were to the provision of aid to the civil power. Not only did the depots “not admit of their [officers] being instructed as they ought to be”, but during Rose’s comprehensive tour of inspection of the country in August and September 1865, he observed that “none of these three depots [Limerick, Cork, and Fermoy] were fit to perform those duties which would be required of them during the winter, should the country be disturbed.”¹²⁹

Rose attempted to address the deficiencies in the Depot Battalions in numerous ways, starting with an insistence on improved discipline. This he instilled personally through the repetition of drill and manoeuvres for battalions where he deemed them to be inadequate during inspections. The main thrust, which runs in accordance with Hawkins’ assertion of the need to examine the precise make up of troops rather than just their numbers, was an attempt to substitute depot battalions with Regiments of the Line, where normal regimental rotations allowed. The policy was explained by Rose to Wodehouse: overall infantry numbers “do not require to be increased, but that its efficiency ought to be augmented, and that these should be effected by substituting from England two regiments of infantry of the line for the three depot battalions stationed in Limerick, Tipperary and Cork.”¹³⁰ This would address inefficiency without the “embarrassment on account of [lack of] Barracks accommodation” or by attracting attention and excitement through the reinforcement of the service beyond its normal strength.¹³¹ Not only would this increase the quality of soldier, but also the quality of officers commanding. As Rose suggested to the new Deputy Quarter Master General (DQMG), Colonel Somerset, “to leave Limerick and its dependencies under either Col. Bingham or North would be a nonsense.”¹³²

¹²⁸ Wodehouse to de Grey, 19 Jan. 1865. Bodl., Kim. Ms Eng C 4018, 1-2.

¹²⁹ Rose to Duke of Cambridge, 30 August 1865. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,821, 26-31.

¹³⁰] Rose to Wodehouse, 14 Sept. 1865. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,821, 39-41; Bodl., Kim. Ms Eng C 4031, 146.

¹³¹ Rose to Duke of Cambridge, 11 Sept. 1865. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,821, 43.

¹³² Rose to Somerset, 12 Sept. 1865. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,821, 40.

The limiting factor for Rose was a decade-old standing order from the Horse Guards that fixed the locations of depots in Ireland permanently, giving him no discretion in their distribution. He wrote to the Duke of Cambridge in late August 1865 to highlight his difficulty, saying that he was unable to implement the changes required by the Irish government until “I receive Your Royal Highness’s gracious permission to make changes in some of the stations of Depot Battalions which were fixed in the Adjutant General’s letter of 3 October 1856.”¹³³ Following the request, Rose submitted a plan for redistribution of the depots based on new locations that “are not subject to the same liability as to possible aid to the Civil Power”, in other words, where their diminished capabilities would be of no great harm to the good of the service, or the country.¹³⁴ Colonel Somerset proposed redistribution along the following grounds:

- 10th Depot Bttn, Belfast – to remain
- 11th Depot Bttn, Templemore – to remain
- 12th Depot Bttn, Limerick – to Enniskillen
- 13th Depot Bttn, Fermoy – to Birr
- 14th Depot Bttn, Cork - to Mullingar.¹³⁵

Initially, the Duke of Cambridge granted Rose only limited scope, allowing him to move the Limerick depot to Birr, but he must subsequently have granted him some discretionary powers as the worst of the remaining depot battalions were moved away from the known Fenian hotspots. The 14th battalion was moved to Athlone and Longford, and the remaining Cork depot ordered to Mullingar in October 1865.¹³⁶ With his concerns regarding the depot battalions at least partly addressed at such an early stage, Rose shifted his attention to tackle other deficiencies in the army’s organization in Ireland.

¹³³ The Adjutant General’s Corps is one of the largest corps in the army and is responsible for developing army personnel policies. In modern terms, the AG is the army’s Human Resources Manager.

¹³⁴ Rose to Duke of Cambridge, 11 Sept. 1865. BL, ADD MS 42,821, 43.

¹³⁵ Memorandum of Deputy Quarter Master General, Colonel Somerset, Kim, Ms Eng C 4061.

¹³⁶ Duke of Cambridge to Rose, 23 Sept. 1865, Quoted in Rose to Duke of Cambridge 25 Sept. 1865, BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,832, 64-8. Rose to Wodehouse, 12 Oct. 1865. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,821, 108-9; Bodl. Kim, Ms Eng C 4034, 67-8. Rose to Col. Somerset, 12 Sept. 1865. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,821, 40. It is extremely difficult to track depot battalions beyond 1865 due to a change within the War Office records which shifted in 1866 to reporting distribution based along divisions, that fails to identify all depot battalions. See TNA, WO 73/6-10. Instead we must rely on the incomplete discussion of their movements in the Rose Papers.

Artillery

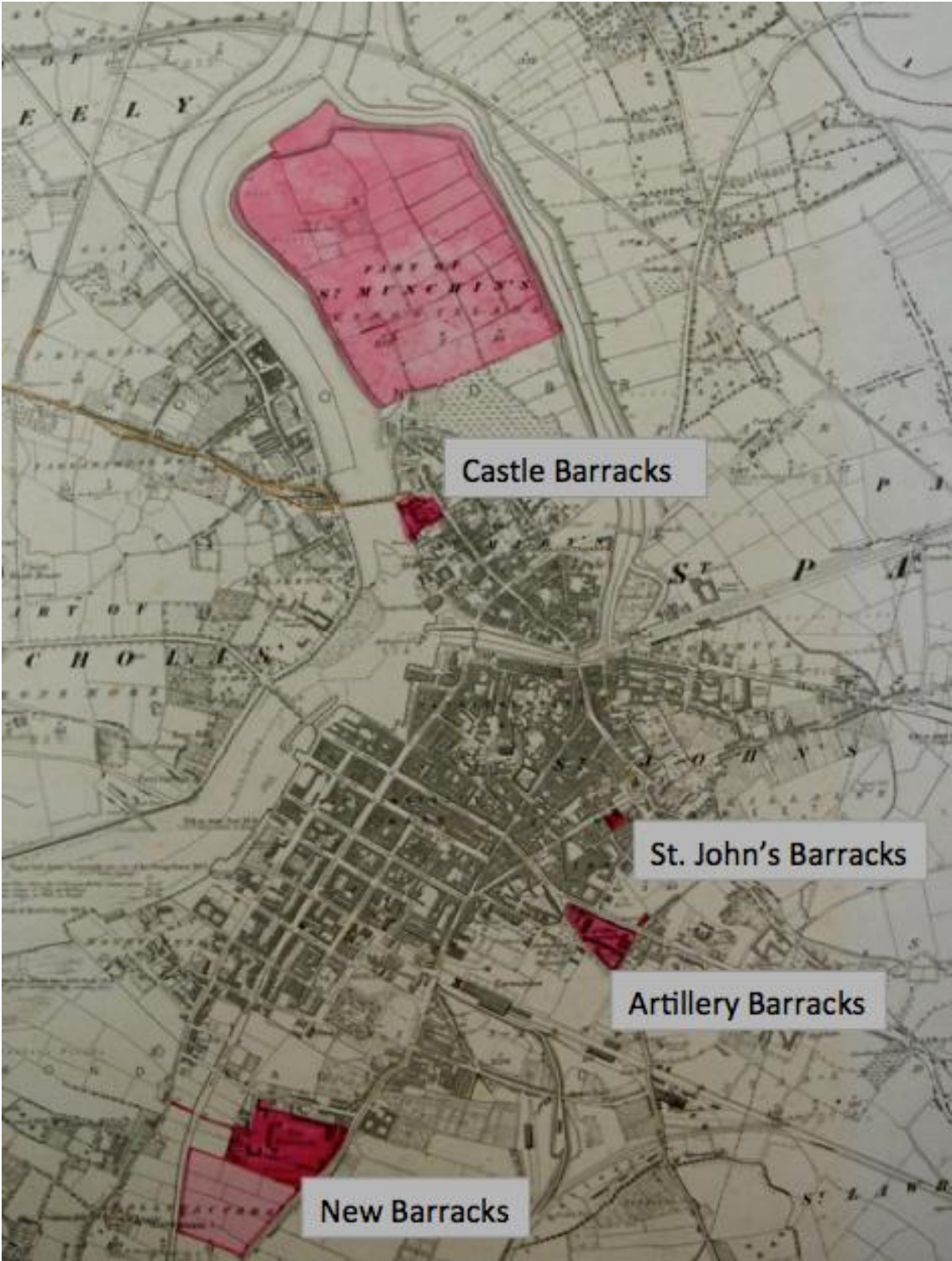
The need to regularize the distribution of other branches of the Army along practical military lines can be primarily attributed to the lax distribution of forces under General Brown and his predecessors. Rose understood the need for the infantry, cavalry, and artillery to be distributed in a mutually supporting manner to increase their infrastructural capabilities and reduce their vulnerability. Of particular concern was the artillery, which Rose viewed as being too often left “in the air” in both rural and urban settings. While the artillery was “a very powerful arm”, it was particularly susceptible to attack when left isolated and should always be co-located with infantry and cavalry.¹³⁷ In Cork, the artillery and cavalry were stationed alone, separated from the infantry by a distance of six miles. Similarly, at Clonmel eight miles separated the two bodies. This Rose remedied by “having attached cavalry and infantry to the battery at Ballincollig, the other [artillery detachment in Cork] I moved to Kilkenny where it will be properly protected, and I have re-enforced the battery at Clonmel with infantry.”¹³⁸

An example of the problems associated with Artillery in an urban setting was evident in Limerick city. Rose identified the danger of having the Artillery Barracks separated from the rest of the troops in the New Barracks by at least one mile of city streets (See Map 3.1). To rectify this he requested that Wodehouse should have the New Barracks “fitted for a Battery of Artillery” to harmonize the distribution. Such efforts dramatically increased the infrastructural capabilities of all branches of the British Army in Ireland while simultaneously eliminating points of potential weakness that the Fenians might exploit.

¹³⁷ Rose to Wodehouse, 9 Sept. 1865. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,821,28-30; Bodl., Kim. Ms Eng C 4031, 58-65.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

Map 3.1. British Army Barracks and land in Limerick City (1860)



Source: TNA, WO 78/4387

Cavalry

The distribution of the cavalry presented its own set of challenges for Rose to overcome beyond the question of its integration with the artillery and infantry units.¹³⁹ At Longford, for example, the cavalry detachment was not only isolated, but was also expected to operate in “a country not suited to cavalry”, due to the boggy terrain.¹⁴⁰ At the Curragh, the horses of the cavalry and the Royal Artillery were forced to travel six miles every day to the drinking troughs, a situation that baffled Rose. The solution was “as simple as it was evident” with the troughs being moved to the cavalry camp instead.¹⁴¹ This flippancy with regards to the troughs may, however, be as illustrative of Rose’s own ego, as of the provision of an adequate water supply for the Curragh, an issue that had been a continuous problem since its establishment in 1855.¹⁴² A more significant infrastructural problem existed, however, as the cavalry in late 1865 was under its usual strength, in part because of the frequent relocation of the regiment due to be deployed in Ireland. At this point, Rose considered it sufficient that replacement regiments should be “held in readiness to move from England to Ireland” on short notice if required.¹⁴³

The arrests on 15 September 1865 of the Fenians in Cork and Dublin involved in the *Irish People* newspaper highlighted further problems associated with cavalry usage in Ireland and saw the almost immediate call up of those regiments held in readiness. While it was common practice to employ cavalry in the cities as escorts for prisoners, they were militarily unsuited to operations in cramped conditions where their vulnerability as a target outweighed the security they provided. Rose consistently argued that cavalry should not be placed in “an unmilitary position”, but this had become so common a practice as to be expected by the local Magistrates. In December 1865, for example, Colonel Lake of the DMP submitted a requisition to General Cunynghame, Commanding the Dublin Division,

¹³⁹ For a brief treatment of the cavalry problem across the 19th Century see; Hoppen, *Elections, Politics, and Society in Ireland, 1832-1885*, 419.

¹⁴⁰ Rose to Duke of Cambridge, 18 August, 1865. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,821, 16.

¹⁴¹ Rose to Capt. Raenhill, 1 Sept. 1865. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,821, 33.

¹⁴² Costello, *A Most Delightful Station: The British Army on the Curragh of Kildare, Ireland, 1855-1922*, 26-27.

¹⁴³ Rose to Duke of Cambridge, 11 Sept. 1865. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,821, 43.

“to patrol the whole circular road tonight with small cavalry detachments”, to which Rose forcefully objected, causing the requisition’s withdrawal.¹⁴⁴

This problem persisted through the late 1860s, with Rose continuing his frustrated argument with Conservative Lord Lieutenant Abercorn by noting that

Cavalry in the streets are not a precaution; they are more than useless; they are an impediment. A horse or two shot by revolvers, they at once prevent the march of the escort and van, with prisoners, and confusion would very likely ensue. The only proper arm, for the protection of an escort if an attack on it is expected, is infantry.¹⁴⁵

Hamstrung by his obligation to aid the civil power in the case of formal, written requisitions, the only solution was recourse to a technicality. While the civil power did have a right to require military aid, Rose argued that the requisitioning magistrate “has no right to name the description or amount of force – still less after the superior Military Authority has objected for military reasons involving the safety of the escort and of the service to be performed.”¹⁴⁶ This sentiment was formally codified by Rose in his “General Orders” to troops (see below), when he instructed that

Nothing can be more disadvantageous than the employment in Ireland of Cavalry alone, without Infantry, whether in Towns, Villages, Roads, or in enclosed country. Cavalry are not trained to go across country, and therefore, if attacked in an enclosed country, are helpless – the civil service they are required to assist is exposed to the almost certain risk of failure, and men and horses are liable to be dangerously assaulted without the means of protecting themselves. Cavalry alone in streets and against houses, are, it is needless to say, not only useless, but by their unsafe position invite attack.¹⁴⁷

This line of argument seemed to gain little traction, as urban detachments continued regardless, with subsequent requisitions for cavalry pickets located around Dublin in the Linen Hall, Castle, Royal and Island Bridge Barracks all being met by the military.¹⁴⁸ This debate was reignited two years later under the threat

¹⁴⁴ Rose to Duke of Cambridge, 30 Dec. 1865. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,821, 224-6. See also Gen Rose to Wodehouse 24 Dec. 1865, BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,821, 161. Original emphases.

¹⁴⁵ Rose to Abercorn, 3 May 1865. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,824, 44-5.

¹⁴⁶ Rose to Abercorn, 5 May 1865. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,824, 51.

¹⁴⁷ Strathnairn and Mackenzie, ‘General Orders for the Guidance of the Troops in Affording Aid to the Civil Power in Ireland’, 21–22. Enclosure in TNA, WO 33/21A.

¹⁴⁸ Rose to Wodehouse, 11 Dec. 1865. Kim, Ms Eng C 4037, 142-9.

of Irish-Americans attempting to rescue Fenian prisoners in Dublin in May 1867, but again with no satisfaction for Rose's appeals.¹⁴⁹

The ability of the cavalry to shift rapidly from garrison to field during the outbreak is illustrated in Table 3.2. This demonstrates that the Dublin Division remained relatively unchanged, but detachments from the Cork Division were redistributed to areas of most need. While this redistribution was not as pronounced as in the case of the infantry (discussed below), it indicates how useful the force of 3,860 could prove at the outbreak of the rising, and how much unused capability remained to be called upon in the event that the rising became a nationwide phenomenon. This is qualified only by the fact that there were only sufficient horses for available three-quarters of the cavalrymen in Ireland. (See Appendix C)

¹⁴⁹ Rose to Abercorn, 3 May 1867. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,824, 44-5.

Table 3.2. Cavalry Distribution February-May, 1867

		Feb	March	April	May
Dublin Division	Newbridge	779	804	524	552
	Curragh	75	72	282	295
	Carlow	54	52	59	59
	Longford	106	98	62	60
	Castlebar	44	47	47	46
	Royal	405	417	406	406
	Arbour Hill	55	55	55	55
	Portobello	80	82	82	82
	Island Bridge	549	545	542	538
	Dundalk (HQ)	446	432	310	489
	Belfast	57	57	56	55
	Belturbert	56	54	14	35
	Athlone	40	40	36	40
	Mullingar			38	
Cork Division	Cahir (HQ)	285	236	242	320
	Limerick	80	123	85	81
	Carrick-on-Suir	26	26	26	26
	Waterford	47	49	47	47
	Clonmel	87	86	51	47
	Mallow		44		
	Cork (HQ)	271	240	186	202
	Ballincollig	144	164	180	174
	Bandon	19	19	20	19
	Skibbereen	40	41	40	39
	Fermoy	72	18	76	74
	Killarney		31		
	Killorghin		15		
	Cahirciveen		13		
	Killmalloch			48	39
	Lismore			37	
	Tipperary			44	
	Clare Castle			37	
	Thurles			125	
	Macroom			53	42
	Fethard				40
Total Available		3817	3860	3810	3862

Source: War Office: TNA, WO 73/6-10

Redistribution of the Infantry

The arguments surrounding the redistribution of the infantry exemplified both the internal political tensions in Ireland and the broader imperial trends of the time.

The infantry had been systematically withdrawn from rural areas in Ireland in

much the same way that the War Office sought to withdraw imperial troops from the colonies. Those calls for empire-wide retrenchment on both financial and ideological grounds strengthened from 1846 with the appointment of Earl Grey as Colonial Secretary.¹⁵⁰ This led to the gradual implementation of a policy of colonial self-reliance, most notably in Canada in the immediate aftermath of the US Civil War and in New Zealand during the Maori Wars.¹⁵¹ The argument on both the domestic and imperial scale might be summarized by noting that it was militarily more sound to have large concentrations of troops, but politically more palatable to spread the army over a wide area where its palliative and economic benefits might be more widely appreciated.

To fulfil their policing duties in Ireland in the second decade of the nineteenth century, “the forces had to be split up into expensively and dangerously small detachments”, a role inimical to the financial retrenchments required.¹⁵² Crossman has argued that, “rather than strategic considerations, the balance maintained between permanent barracks and half billets¹⁵³ was determined less by military judgment, than by financial pressures of retrenchment.”¹⁵⁴ Upon his appointment as Commander-in-Chief of the Army in Ireland in 1836, Field Marshal Sir Edward Blakeney tried in particular “to reduce the practice of dispersing troops in small bodies by withdrawing as many detachments as possible.”¹⁵⁵ The need to remove the use of half-billets aside, the significance of the distribution of the troops by the 1860s highlights the return to the fore of political imperatives rather than simply economic and strategic considerations. This tension was ever-present

¹⁵⁰ Burroughs, ‘Imperial Defense and the Victorian Army’, 60; Hew Strachan, ‘Lord Grey and Imperial Defence’, in *Politicians and Defence: Studies in the Formulation of British Defence Policy 1845-1970*, ed. I. F. W. Beckett and John Gooch (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1981), 8.

¹⁵¹ D. M. Schurman, *Imperial Defence, 1868-1887*, ed. John F. Beeler, Cass Series--Naval Policy and History 12 (London: Frank Cass, 2000), 11; Stacey, *The Undefended Border: The Myth and the Reality*, 11-12; Spiers, E.M., *The Late Victorian Army 1868-1902*, 272-74.

¹⁵² Ó Ceallaigh, ‘Peel and Police Reform in Ireland, 1814-18’, 25.

¹⁵³ A ‘Half-Billet’ was off-site troop accommodation in a rural district, but which was still nominally associated with a specific permanent barracks. It was a compromise between the old practice of ‘quartering’ of troops in local households and in permanent barracks. For example, the Clare-Castle barracks had 24 half-billet stations linked to it in 1831, reflecting the extent of rural disaffection during the Tithe War. That year, the distribution of the army in Ireland consisted of 63 Half-Billet stations, broadly comparable with the 70 barracks nationwide, 10 Dublin barracks and 5 temporary barrack. See *United Services Magazine*, Volume 7 (1831), 558-9.

¹⁵⁴ Crossman, ‘Irish Barracks in the 1820s and 1830s: A Political Perspective’, 212-13.

¹⁵⁵ Malcolm, ‘From Light Infantry to Constabulary: The Military Origins of the Irish Police, 1798-1850’, 174.

in the interactions between the Irish Executive and Rose, who wanted a reinforcement that neither caused a public panic nor resulted in a more diffuse distribution of the troops.

Similar discussions regarding the economic and strategic viability of small detachments in Ireland had emerged in the early 1840s between the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, the Duke of Wellington, and Inspector General of Fortifications, Sir John Burgoyne, which informed the subsequent response to the Young Irelanders.¹⁵⁶ Their rising of 1848 was kept in check, partly by the limits of its public appeal, and partly “potential support from the artisans of the cities and towns [being] neutralised by large and alert military garrisons”.¹⁵⁷ During the Famine, the use of force by the army and constabulary was intended not only to maintain public order but also to deny the Young Irelanders the opportunity to meet British regulars in the field. From 1853 onwards the principal factor in deciding military postings in Ireland reverted to cost considerations. This tended towards concentration of the forces into larger garrisons, which paralleled the experience in Canada, which Strachan has argued had been “scattered in small detachments,” but which were consolidated in Kingston and Quebec city.¹⁵⁸ In both Canada and Ireland this was not only more cost effective, but consistent with the doctrine promoted by one of the nineteenth century’s most influential military philosophers, Antoine-Henri Jomini.¹⁵⁹ According to the Master-General of the Ordnance Henry Hardinge, this concentration was “best adapted to meet the exigencies both of national defence, and of the suppression of internal commotions.”¹⁶⁰ However, the tensions between those two prerogatives remained highly contested throughout the time of the Fenian Conspiracy and beyond.

Wodehouse, Naas and Rose all looked back at how army distribution had been decided in anticipation of the 1848 rising as a guide to the formation of their

¹⁵⁶ Prunty, ‘Military Barracks and Mapping in the Nineteenth Century: Sources and Issues for Irish Urban History’, 498–500.

¹⁵⁷ Comerford, *The Fenians in Context*, 16; Gwynn, *Young Ireland and 1848*, 247.

¹⁵⁸ Strachan, ‘Lord Grey and Imperial Defence’, 8.

¹⁵⁹ John Shy and Peter Paret, ‘Jomini’, in *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986), 143–85.

¹⁶⁰ TNA, WO 33/3/5516, 1. Quoted in Semple, 20.

own policies, but they came to very different conclusions. Wodehouse contacted his old mentor, the Earl of Clarendon, who had been Lord Lieutenant from May 1847 to February 1852, for advice on the use of the army and on the degree to which it had been infiltrated in 1848. He also wrote to Prime Minister Earl Russell with regards to Stephens' involvement in "the cabbage garden affair."¹⁶¹ The advice he received resulted in his conclusion that "in 1848 a regular programme was prepared so that in the event of any sudden attempt, especially at night, the military and police authorities should know what to do at once."¹⁶² Where, as noted already in Chapter Two, the Inspector General of Constabulary undertook a detailed plan for Wodehouse, General Rose responded in a far more *ad hoc* manner. Wodehouse's well-intentioned research seems to have only frustrated Rose, who replied pointedly that the situation in 1848 bore little resemblance to the current scenario. He replied directly to Wodehouse at the end of 1865 that

With respect to the programme of measures against a rising in 1848, the danger then was considered much greater, or more imminent; for the force, at that time in Ireland was nearly double of what it is present, upwards of 30,000 men.¹⁶³

Throughout his frequent correspondence with the Duke of Cambridge, Rose developed this comparison by noting that, "altho' in 1848 the demonstration and combinations were greater, yet then as now, not a shot was fired at a soldier and in 1848 an element of disorder now in activity did not exist, Irish leaders trained in a long and great war."¹⁶⁴ By March 1867, however, Rose appears to have reversed his opinion of 1848 by noting that, "altho' the public peace is far more seriously disturbed at present than in 1848, the force in Ireland is 11,200 men lower than it was at that time."¹⁶⁵ The implication here is that the legacy of the American Civil War and the return of many Fenians required a different kind of military response, based on concentration, because a landing could pose an existential threat to British control of Ireland. An analysis based on the specifics of composition and distribution, rather than simply the gross number of soldiers, is appropriate

¹⁶¹ Wodehouse to Clarendon, 10 Apr. 1865, Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4024, 163-4; Wodehouse to Clarendon, 22 Feb. 1866. Bod, MS Clarendon Dep. C. 99, 71-3; Wodehouse to Earl Russell, 21 Nov. 1865, Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4036, 86-8.

¹⁶² Wodehouse to Rose, 10 Dec. 1865. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4037, 139-41.

¹⁶³ Rose to Wodehouse, 11 Dec. 1865. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,821, 185-6.

¹⁶⁴ Rose to Duke of Cambridge, 19 Dec. 1865, BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,821, 201-7.

¹⁶⁵ Enclosure cited in Naas to Secretary of State, Home Department, 10 Mar., 1867. NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 1732, 4007.

therefore, because it was precisely in this manner that the decisions were conceptualized at the time.

With the change of administrations in the summer of 1866, Chief Secretary Naas continued the same kind of historical inquiries, going as far as to request that the War Office provide a detailed comparison of the trooping allocations in May 1848 and December 1866, complete with an accompanying map (See Map 3.2, below).¹⁶⁶ These inquiries led him to a very different conclusion. Writing to Lord Lieutenant Abercorn, Naas vented his frustration at the resistance of the military authorities to the implementing of a politically determined troop distribution. He commented presciently,

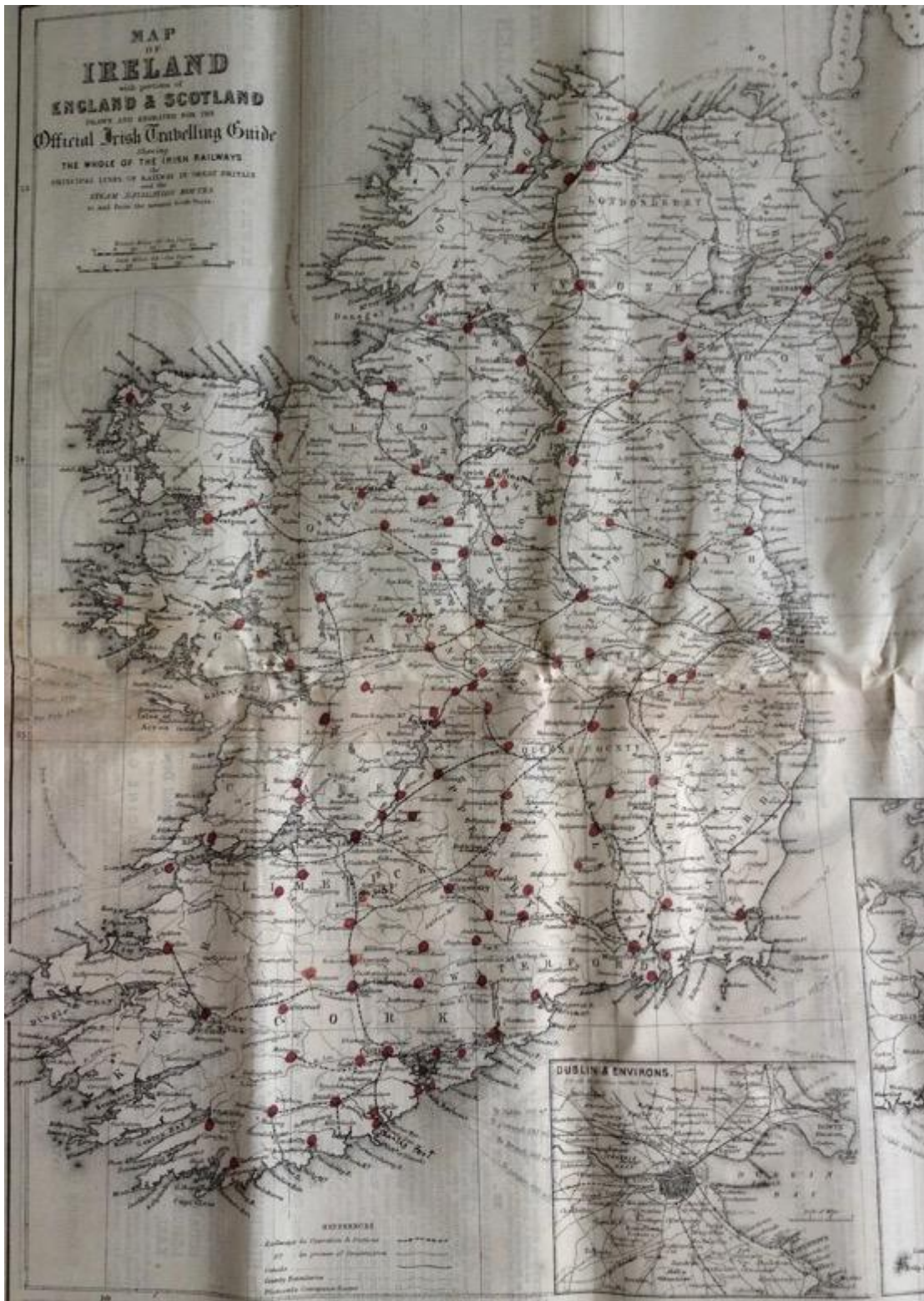
Do not let us consider 'strategic' reasons for placing troops; we are not going to fight a pitched battle or carry on a campaign. All we can expect and the worst we should be prepared for can be the assembling of an undisciplined mob of half-armed desperados who might plunder [...] houses and attack isolated Police Barracks. To meet such a movement small bodies of troops of 200 to 400 men who should be ready to act at a moment's notice are the best means we can take for the preservation of life and property and the protection of the constabulary.¹⁶⁷

Thus, the motivation behind the redistribution of troops between September 1865 and the outbreak of the rising in March 1867 illustrated the civil/military tension that existed within the highest levels of the Irish Administration and the contrasting ways in which it was hoped to increase the state's infrastructural power and guarantee Irish defensive security.

¹⁶⁶ NLI, Mayo Papers. MS 43,887/1.

¹⁶⁷ Naas to Abercorn, 15 Dec. 1866. Abercorn Papers, PRONI, T 2541/VR/85/2.

Map 3.2. Distribution of Soldiers in Ireland, May 1848



Source: Enclosure in: NLI, Mayo Papers. MS 43,887/1

Each step in the redistribution fulfilled one aspect of Rose's or Wodehouse's vision for a unified defensive system, though with competing civil and military priorities. The civil aspect required additional troops in rural locations to supplement the Irish Constabulary and to allay the growing sense of panic felt by the local gentry, one of Wodehouse's primary constituencies. (See Figure 3.4) They inundated Wodehouse (and later Naas) with constant requests for troops to defend their person and property in the event of attack. So prolific were the requests from the gentry that eventually concessions had to be made. Writing to Rose in early February 1866 (prior to the Suspension of *Habeas Corpus*), Wodehouse identified the scale of the political problem he faced. Herein he sketched out for Rose the main areas from which requests had been received and that he thought required attention. These included:

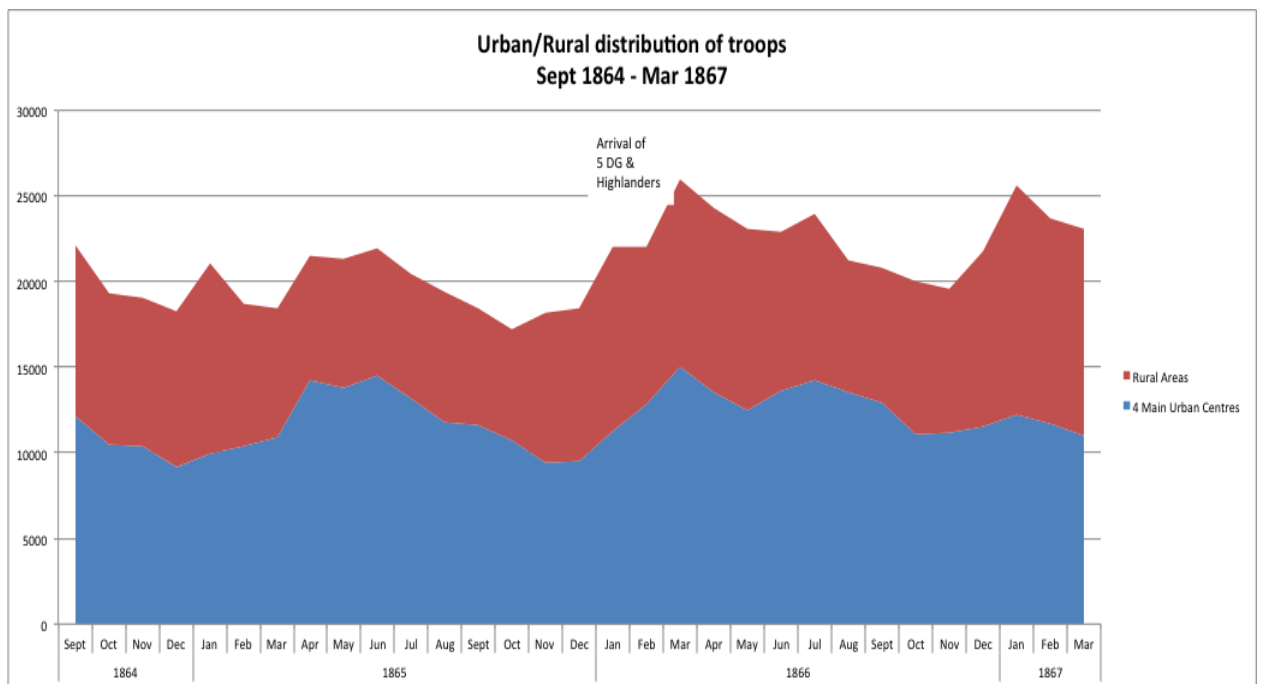
Kerry – Killarney
Cork – Macroom, Clonakilty,
Waterford – Dungarvan, Lismore, Cappoquin, Tallow
Wexford – Wexford, Enniscorthy, New Ross
Tipperary – Fethard, Clogheen, Roscrea, Nenagh
Clare – Clare Castle
Galway – Galway
Mayo – Ballina
Roscommon – Roscommon, Boyle
Longford – Longford
King's County – Tullamore
Limerick – Charleville.¹⁶⁸

Given the hectic schedule that the Lord Lieutenant was expected to undertake during the Dublin "season" while he resided and entertained at his apartments in Dublin Castle, it can be imagined that many more of such requests were received informally. All this occurred at a time when the Treasury intended to further reduce the number of barracks throughout the country on financial grounds. The Horse Guards designated thirty-seven barracks to be either converted into Constabulary or Militia Barracks, or be sold off for other uses.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ Wodehouse to Rose, 1 Feb. 1866. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4041, 7-12.

¹⁶⁹ Horeseguards Minute. Enclosure in: Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4032, 163-4. The barracks scheduled for closure, sale, or reassignment included: Tullamore, Philipstown, Mallow, Millstreet, Clogheen, Cashel, Fethard, New Inn, Ballinrobe, ballaghadreen, Ballinamult Omagh, Rutland, Armagh, Drogheda, Cavan, Monaghan, Michelstown, Oughterarde, Dunmore, Loughrea, Gort, Castlecomer, Bandon, Clonakilty, Roscommon, Granard, Trim, Navan, Maryborough, Sligo, Ballyshannon, New Ross, Dungarvan, Wexford, Arklow, Ennis. This would have represented a dramatic diminution of the infrastructural power of the state and the Army in particular.

Figure 3.4. Urban/Rural Distribution of Troops - September 1864-March 1867



Source: TNA, W.O. 73/5, 73/6, 73/7, 73/8

The relatively small impact of the arrival of the 5th Dragoon Guards, the First Battalion, Coldstream Guards, and two battalions of the 92nd Highlanders in February 1866 (indicated on Figure 3.4 above) aside, the deployment managed to keep the rural/urban balance relatively stable, thus negating any political damage to the Government.

Rose, Wodehouse, and later Naas, all knew that this kind of redistribution was inconsistent with the dominant military thinking at the time. Wodehouse acknowledged this when he noted in a sentiment far more sympathetic to Rose than previously evident, "It is obviously desirable to avoid putting them in billets in such circumstances. Scattered in billets they almost invite attack, and they must grow lax in discipline."¹⁷⁰ Beyond the debate at hand, this passage also highlights the growing influence that Rose was beginning to exert on the relatively inexperienced Viceroy, twenty-five years his junior. This political perception was that the dispatch of troops to areas where a force of constabulary was already present might be interpreted as a knee-jerk reaction to the Fenian threat. This in turn could be seen as giving tacit recognition to the strengths of the Fenianism and

¹⁷⁰ Wodehouse to George Grey, 27 Sept. 1865. Bodl., Kim. Ms Eng C 4033, 23-28.

lend it legitimacy and help to bolster the morale of its rank and file. Wodehouse expressed as much in a letter to Rose in late October 1865 noting, “It is very desirable that the excitement in the country about the Fenians should calm down, and movements of troops to places not hitherto garrisoned tends so much to keep up the excitement that we wish to avoid.”¹⁷¹

In the light of this, one infrastructural reform that Wodehouse hoped would help the situation was the prompt rotation of troops from England as soon as possible after regiments departed for colonial service. As Wodehouse outlined to Rose, “the sending over an ordinary relief cannot be attributed to alarm on the part of the Govt, and this is certainly not a time when the establishment should be below its usual strength.”¹⁷² While this might seem like a relatively mundane request, the difficulty in achieving prompt replacements was often considerable and had, as previously noted, caused a significant drop off of the cavalry quota in the Cork Division. It was only Wodehouse’s vigorous lobbying effort with the Duke of Cambridge and Home Secretary, George Grey, that had rectified the situation.¹⁷³

Throughout the current historiography, the civil-military tug of war that grew to its peak in the winter of 1866 is described as having been adjudicated by the Prime Minister, Lord Derby, who “came down largely on Strathnairn’s (Rose’s) side.”¹⁷⁴ Writing to Naas on 8 December 1866, Derby urged for a compromise between the two competing demands, but echoed the Commander-in-Chief by instructing the Chief Secretary: “do not make requisitions which, in a military point of view, would impair the efficiency of the Army, in case it should be called on to act.”¹⁷⁵ Jenkins attributes the Prime Minister’s compromise to a fear on the part of the Cabinet that Rose would “throw up his command in high dudgeon” if his military wisdom was overruled by mere civilians.¹⁷⁶ Charles Townshend also notes General Rose’s reluctance to allow smaller detachments to be deployed, but concedes the political fallout that would occur were such a detachment to be

¹⁷¹ Wodehouse to Rose, 23 Oct. 1865. Bodl., Kim. Ms Eng C 4034, 168-9.

¹⁷² Wodehouse to Rose, 25 Sept. 1865. Bodl., Kim. Ms Eng C 4033, 21. [Wodehouse’s emphasis]

¹⁷³ See: Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4034, 40-45 & MS Eng C 4033, 64-65.

¹⁷⁴ Ó Broin, *Fenian Fever*, 105.

¹⁷⁵ Lord Derby to Naas, 8 Dec. 1866. Quoted, Ó Broin, 107.

¹⁷⁶ Jenkins, *The Fenian Problem*, 74.

defeated in the field. In a letter to the Duke of Cambridge of 3 December, 1866, Rose warned that “Nothing would create such a panic amongst the loyal supporters of the British Government as the destruction of a detachment of regular troops, and yet it is indisputable that this inauspicious occurrence is liable to happen if detachments are placed in several of the localities required by the Government.”¹⁷⁷

However, closer inspection of the data available for the implementation of troop deployment presents a less confrontational picture. (See Figure 3.5) It was not, as the current historiography presents it, an out-and-out victory for the military administration over their civilian counterparts. In fact, a state of compromise emerged as early as September 1865, when Rose gradually began to authorize the deployment of some smaller detachments to certain isolated areas, a trend that gathered pace right up to the outbreak in February/March 1867, but always done in a manner that Rose felt able to justify militarily. An example of such deployment was his allocation to Castlebar in October 1865. Writing to assuage the fears of the Marquis of Sligo, Rose explained:

I have given you a more liberal allowance of troops than I need have done in the hope that a concentrated force of Cavalry and infantry at the ‘chief lieu’ of the district will prevent the dispersion of isolated small fractions of troops through the county.¹⁷⁸

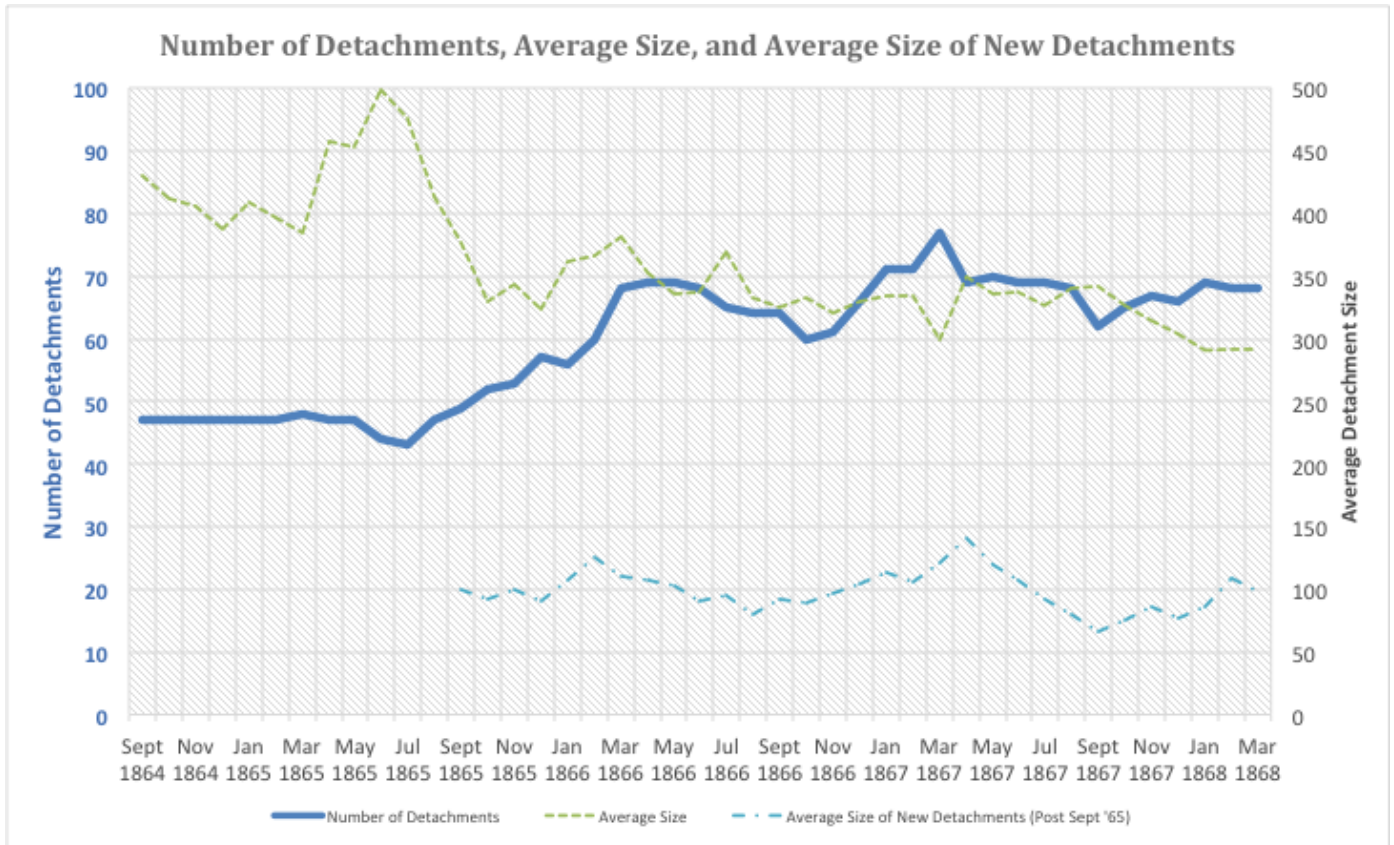
This detachment, which averaged approximately 150 troops over the next eighteen months, was expected to provide both deterrence and reassurance to a whole district, rather than just to a town or a parish, and in so doing, this obviated the necessity for even smaller detachments. As Figure 3.5 illustrates, the number of separate detachments of troops throughout the country increased from 47 in September 1864 to 77 in March 1867 (a 63.8 per cent increase). But from September 1865 onwards, Rose ensured that the average size of the new detachments remained consistently around the 100-man mark (the peak average was 121, the trough 90). Not only did Rose’s efforts to address the Cavalry detachment issue fail, but by March 1867 he had also conceded the need to send detachments to many more coastal areas, particularly in response to the attempted

¹⁷⁷ Townshend, *Political Violence in Ireland*, 91.

¹⁷⁸ Rose to Marquis of Sligo, 8 Oct. 1865. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,821, 103.

rising in Killarney. Here, it can be seen that Rose had already acquiesced in having detachments of a size smaller than had previously been requested.

Figure 3.5. Number of Detachments, Average Size, and Average Size of New Detachments



Source: TNA, WO 73/6-10

One caveat, the presence of Royal Marines in Ireland, renders the over reliance on this data relating to army distribution slightly problematic and necessitates a wider view of the Irish Executive’s counter-insurgency efforts. Here, the March 1867 figure ignores their five deployments to harbour fortifications, which if included would have resulted in a higher spike in March and April 1867. (See Map 6.1. Royal Marines in Cork, March 1867).

It is also difficult to determine the military suitability of the smaller detachments, as the competing contemporary perspectives indicated. The media on both sides of the Atlantic noted that the “*Army and Navy Gazette* says that the troops in Ireland are being distributed more and more among the small towns, thereby giving a greater feeling of security”, which indicates that both the Irish and

American Fenians were taking note of military developments in Ireland in a manner that must surely have pleased the Executive.¹⁷⁹ More specific in their opinion, the conservative Toronto *Leader*, syndicating the opinion of the *Dublin Express's* article titled "Vigour of the Government", claimed that

They [returning Irish-American Fenians] express themselves deterred not so much by the presence of large bodies of troops in the country – a circumstance which they profess to make little account of – but rather as disconcerted by the fact that these troops, are scattered about in every district and that the plans which they had formed are frustrated by the constant surveillance exercised over their movements and the arrest of all who afford ground for suspicion.¹⁸⁰

Along a similar line, Jenkins quotes a letter from the earlier Liberal administration to the editor of *The Times* which noted that, "The immediate objectives were to check conspirators and reassure 'loyalists and waverers [sic] by that ocular demonstration of force and preparedness which even a few red-coats afforded.'"¹⁸¹ By the end of 1866 it appears that Rose was largely converted to the policy of wide distribution, writing privately to the Duke of Cambridge that, in the event of the lapsing of the *Habeas Corpus* suspension act an extended army presence would be necessary to maintain the perception of government control. He conceded that "even if things look quiet, to keep up nearly, if not quite as large a force, as at present, especially that outlying detachments which overawe the people more than the large and unseen forces."¹⁸²

The differing perceptions of the Irish Executive's actions are equally significant. In an environment where the Executive was keen to avoid causing undue alarm, it is worth noting the manner in which US Consuls viewed these actions. Writing to Secretary of State Seward at the close of 1866, the US Consul in Belfast noted that

The government is exercising its power and using its resources to the fullest extent to prevent an outbreak or to speedily suppress it should one unfortunately take place. The military and constabulary have

¹⁷⁹ *Irish Canadian*, 7 Mar., 1866.

¹⁸⁰ *Leader* (Toronto), 2 January, 1867.

¹⁸¹ Jenkins, *The Fenian Problem*, 73.

¹⁸² Rose to Duke of Cambridge, 28 Dec. 1866. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42823, 61-2. This quotation is an example of Rose's dense and inaccessible writing style.

received large accessions to their forces, and are scattered in considerable numbers at every point.¹⁸³ Even if the reality was that only relatively minor reinforcement had taken place, the *perception* of a more comprehensive strengthening of the Garrison was achieved. In his observation that troops were being “scattered in considerable numbers at every point”, Consul Heap reinforced the desired political effect that both Rose and Naas had hoped to achieve.

Beyond simply detachment size, the shift in geographic location of detachments is also significant. Maps 3.3 – 3.7 (below) can be understood to identify two factors, firstly the deployment to areas where local gentry were considered powerful enough to leverage additional protection (such as the County Mayo deployment described above), and secondly, the areas perceived by the Executive to be most consistently disaffected. The south-western focus (particularly from March 1866-March 1867) differs dramatically from the situation in November 1864 (which might be considered as a baseline). The net reduction of troops in Belfast and Newry, and the absence of smaller detachments throughout Ulster that can be observed, does not necessarily challenge recent work that has re-evaluated the strength of Ulster Fenianism, but rather reflects the Executive’s perception that Fenianism posed less of a threat in that area.¹⁸⁴ The attacks on isolated Police Barracks that did occur in February and March 1867, and particularly on those lightly manned Coastguard stations, indicated that General Rose’s fears for the vulnerability of very small detachments were, in fact, well founded.

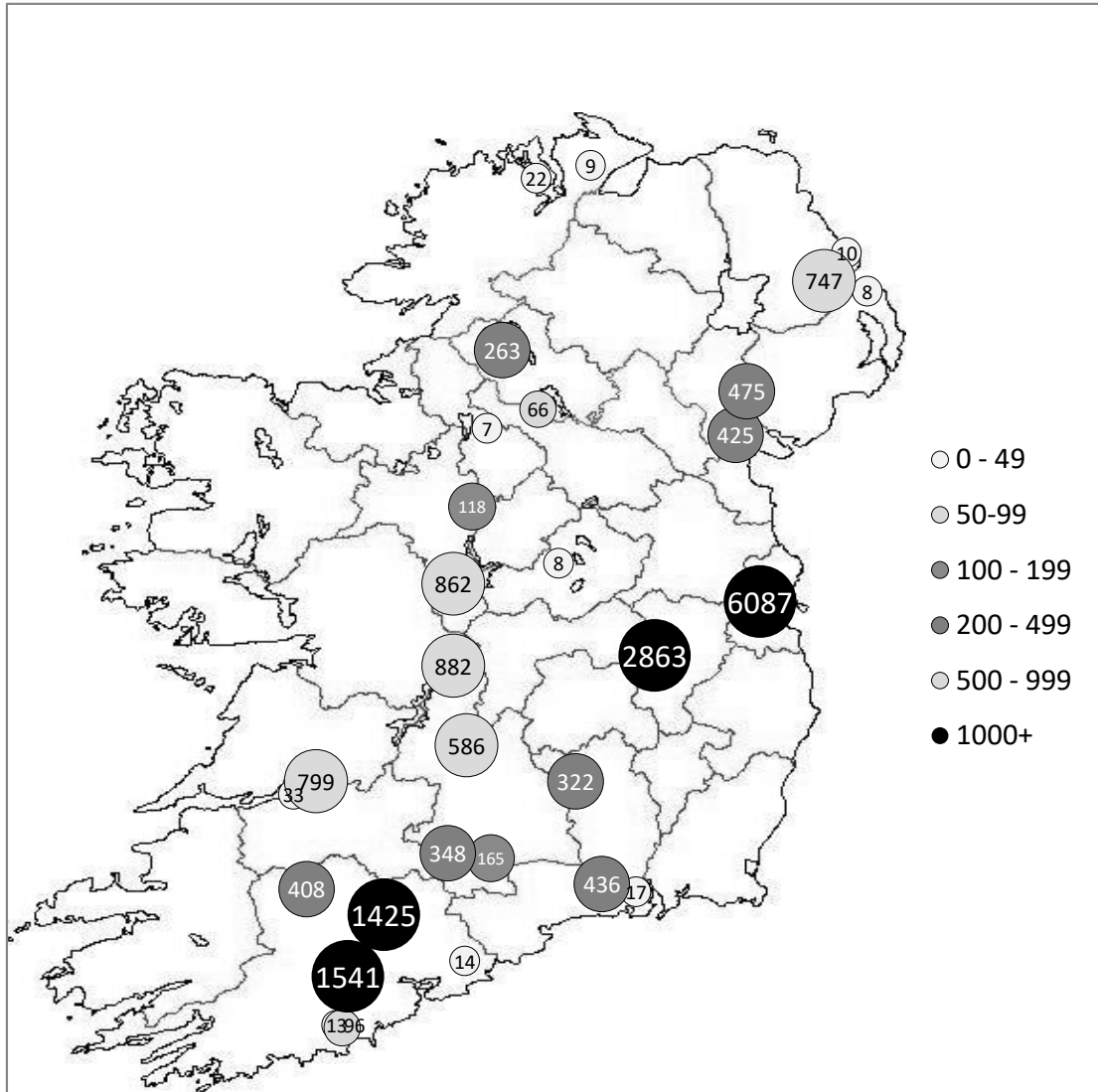
¹⁸³ Consul Heap to Sec of State Seward, 5 Dec. 1866. National Archive and Records Administration (NARA), Records of the Department of State, Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Belfast, No. Ireland, 1796-1906, T 368.

¹⁸⁴ Kerby Miller and Brendan Mac Suibhne, ‘Frank Roney and the Fenians: A Reappraisal of Irish Republicanism in 1860s Belfast and Ulster’, *Eire-Ireland* 51, no. 3 & 4 (Fall/Winter 2016): 23–54.

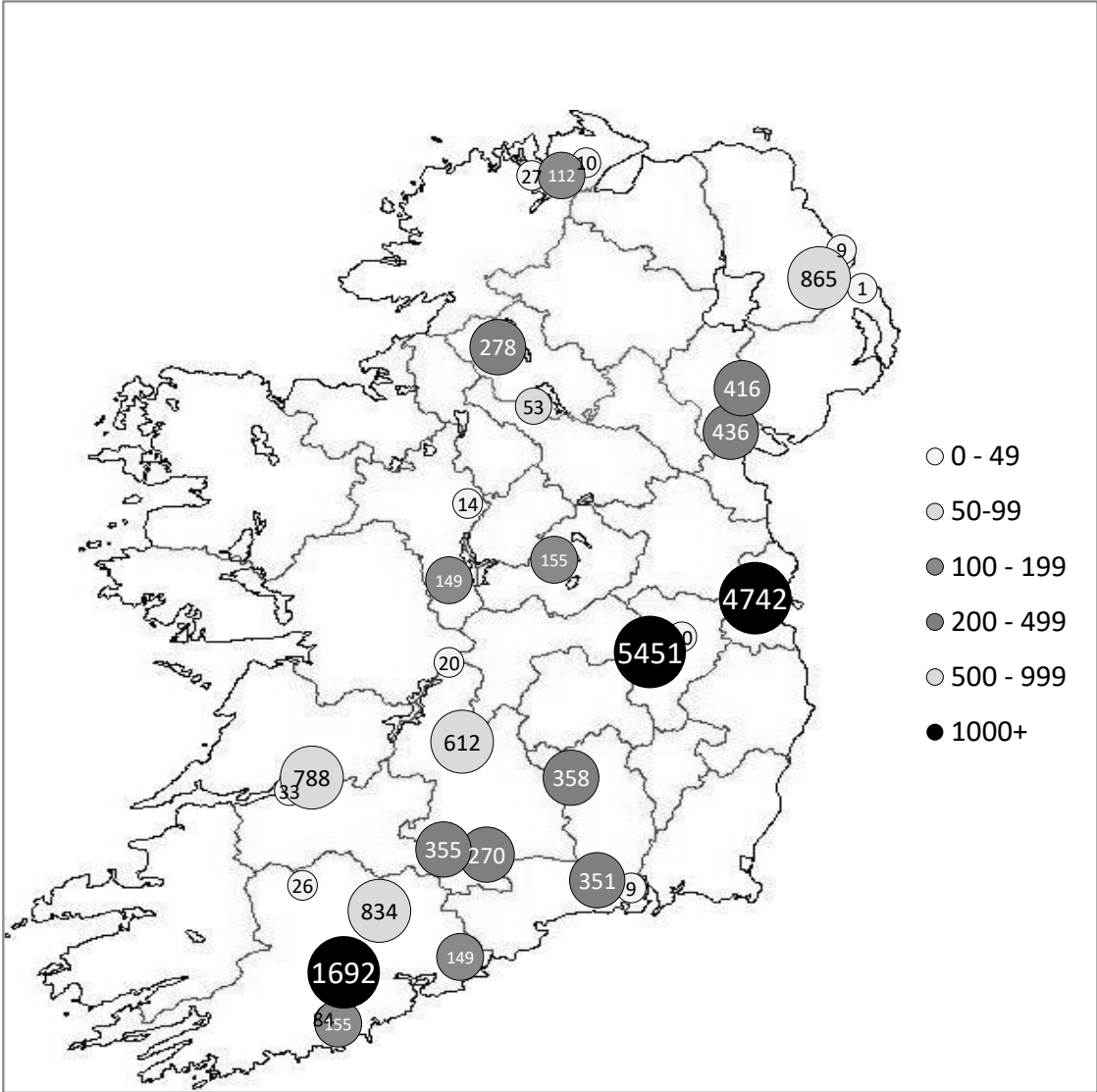
Maps 3.3-3.7. Distribution of Army, November 1864 – March 1868

Source: TNA, WO 73/6-10

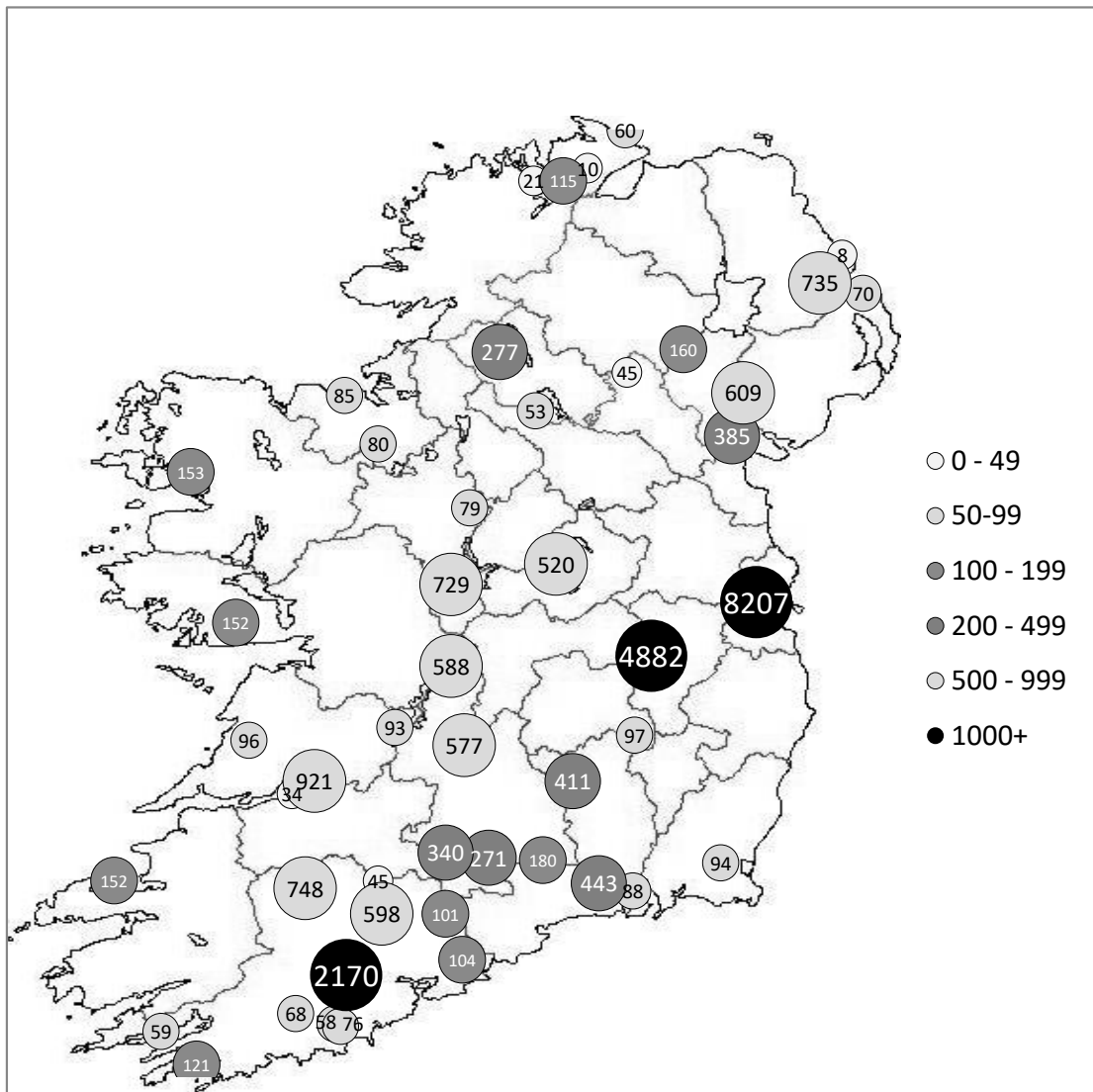
Map 3.3. Distribution of Army, November 1864



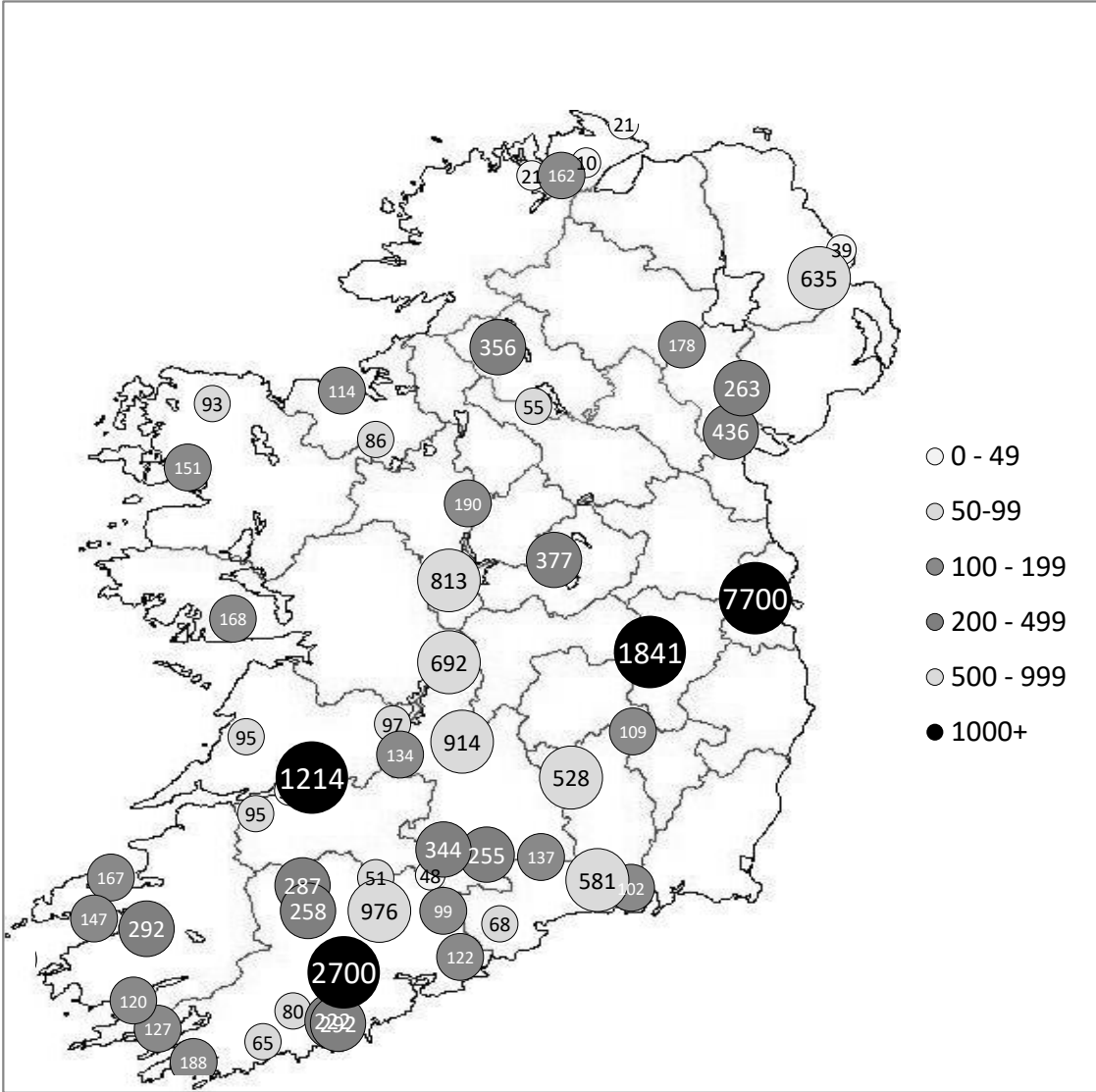
Map 3.4. Distribution of Army, September 1865



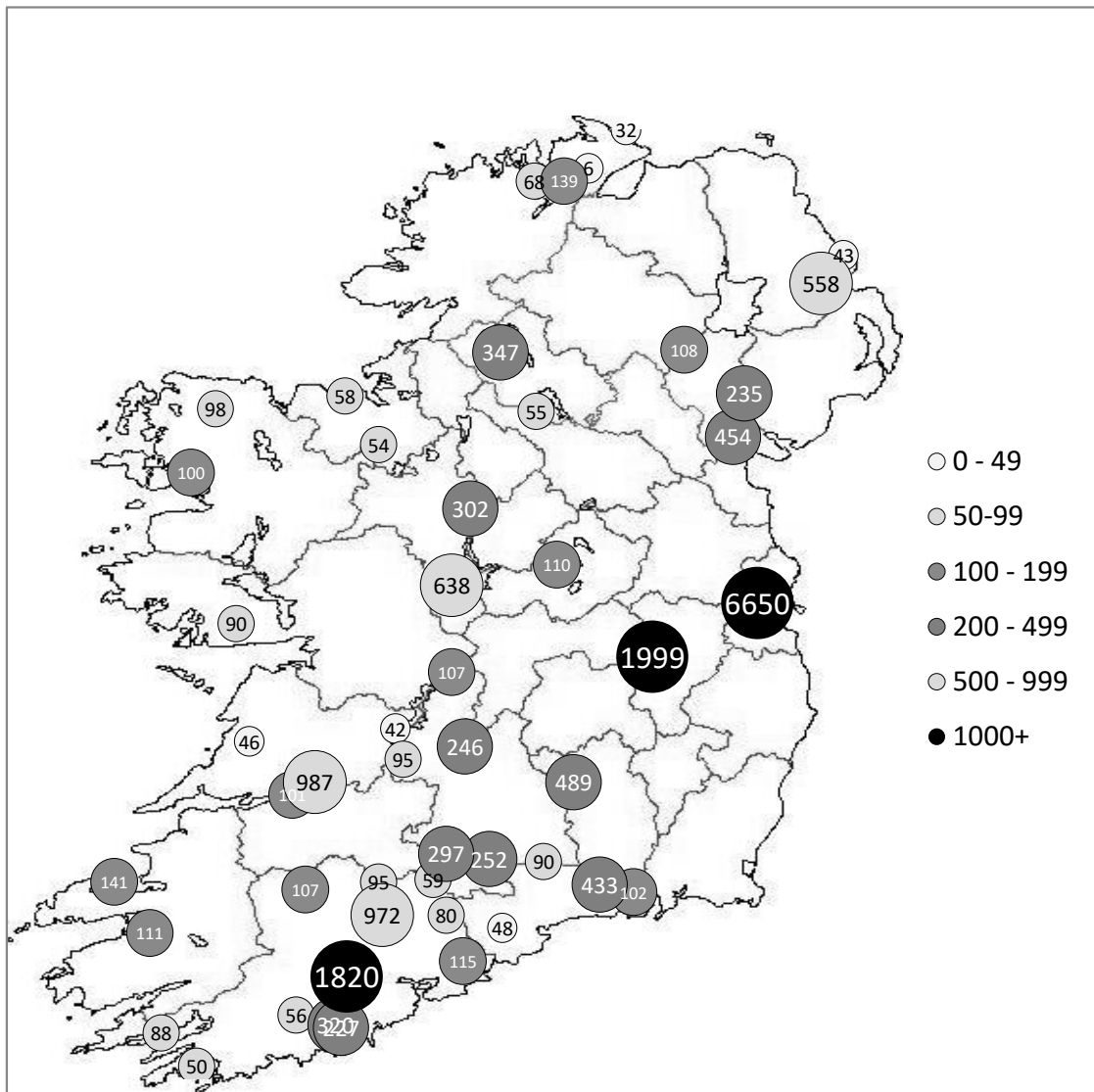
Map 3.5. Distribution of Army, March 1866



Map 3.6. Distribution of Army, February/March 1867



Map 3.7. Distribution of Army, March 1868



Railways

The Fenian Conspiracy also saw an expansion of the state's infrastructural power expressed through the army's use of the railways. Unlike during the 1840s, the rail network had recently expanded significantly and was now virtually nationwide. As a main artery of transport, the railways were not only frequent targets for Fenians, but also provided much of the infrastructure upon which the army's response was dependent.¹⁸⁵ This section argues that a dramatic increase in the army's use of the railways can be directly attributed to the Fenian crisis, and that the mutually beneficial relationship between the army and the private railway companies was strengthened by this interaction. The Great Southern and Western Railway (GS&WR) is chosen as a case study because it was the company most active in the areas chiefly associated with Fenianism.

In Britain, 1865 saw the formation of the Volunteer Engineer and Railway Staff Corps, but Ireland remained outside the remit of this new corps, resulting in army interactions with the railways having to operate on an *ad hoc* basis.¹⁸⁶ Elizabeth Malcolm has gone as far as to suggest that the railways themselves were exploitable on the part of the government, with some instances of constabulary detectives being "employed as porters by railway companies so that they could more easily monitor the movements of people and goods."¹⁸⁷ This, however, appears to have been a development of the early 1870s rather than during the period of the Fenian conspiracy, though it might be noted that in 1848 it was a railway porter in Thurles who had first identified and apprehended William Smith O'Brien.¹⁸⁸ The railways were of course important for the IC too, but parallel analysis of the Constabulary's use of railways appears to be impossible, however, given the nature of the data available in railway archives.

¹⁸⁵ W. McGrath, 'The Fenians at Rathduff', *Journal of the Irish Railway Record Society* 9, no. 50 (October 1969): 130–32.

¹⁸⁶ C. E. C. Townsend, *All Rank and No File: A History of the Engineer and Railway Staff Corps RE. Supplement 1966-1980* (Purley, Surrey: Engineer & Railway Staff Corps R.E. (TAVR), 1981). I am grateful to the expertise of Dr Chris Phillips of the University of Leeds for his suggestions in this area.

¹⁸⁷ Malcolm, 'Investigating the "Machinery of Murder": Irish Detectives and Agrarian Outrages, 1847-70', 84.

¹⁸⁸ Curtis, *The History of the Royal Irish Constabulary*, 85.

The response to the February 1867 outbreak in Killarney was heavily shaped by the railways, not only for transport, but also in other auxiliary ways. The Killarney Railway Hotel, under the management of the GS&WR, was used both to quarter troops and as a depot to store gunpowder.¹⁸⁹ This caused considerable difficulty and additional costs for the GS&WR, whose insurance was invalidated due to the presence of the gunpowder stockpile.¹⁹⁰ The hotel itself incurred £508 worth of damages from the quartered troops. This resulted in an acrimonious correspondence between the GS&WR, Dublin Castle, and the War Office in their attempts to recoup this cost.¹⁹¹ In order that speed of movement and communications could be maintained, an engine was kept permanently “in steam” at Killarney station between 14 and 25 February 1867, at considerable additional cost to the army.¹⁹² The GS&WR also supplemented the Irish Commissariat by providing coal to the troops that occupied Limerick Junction Station, a key transport hub that also acted as a local command centre, particularly in need of fuel due to the poor weather conditions.¹⁹³

‘Special Trains’ were frequently used throughout the period. Their function varied from facilitating the movement of troops around the country, to the escorts of prisoners involved in Cork Special Commissions that dealt with Fenianism at the end of 1865. During the 1867 outbreak, Fenian attacks on the railway line inhibited prompt delivery of the mails, forcing the Irish Executive to rely on the Royal Navy to deliver important security documents by steam ship. The railway works at Inchicore were for a period placed under military guard to guarantee the availability of rolling stock and repairs, with teams of railway workers being placed at likely “black spots” such as wooden bridges.¹⁹⁴ The operation of the Flying Columns also involved the requisitioning of rolling stock. Special Trains

¹⁸⁹ Friday 22 February, 1867. CIE Archives, Great Southern and Western Railway (GS&WR). Board Minute Book No.10, 314. See also, NAI Fenian F files, Box 3, F 2281.

¹⁹⁰ 8 Mar. 1867. CIE, GS&WR. Traffic Committee Minute Book No. 10, 317.

¹⁹¹ William Taylor, Secretary GS&WR to Larcom., 9 Mar., 1867. NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 1732, 3986. Further correspondence see entries for: 25 Oct. & 13 Dec. 1867. CIE, GS&WR. Traffic Committee Minute Book 4. By the end of December 1867 the War Office finally agreed to provide the full £508 rather than the £250 initially offered.

¹⁹² 6 Mar. 1867. CIE, GS&WR. Traffic Committee Minute Book 4, 23-4.

¹⁹³ 6 Nov. 1867. CIE, GS&WR. Traffic Committee Minute Book 4, 127.

¹⁹⁴ G.R. Mahon, ‘Irish Railways in 1867’, *Journal of the Irish Railway Record Society* 9, no. 49 (June 1969): 83.

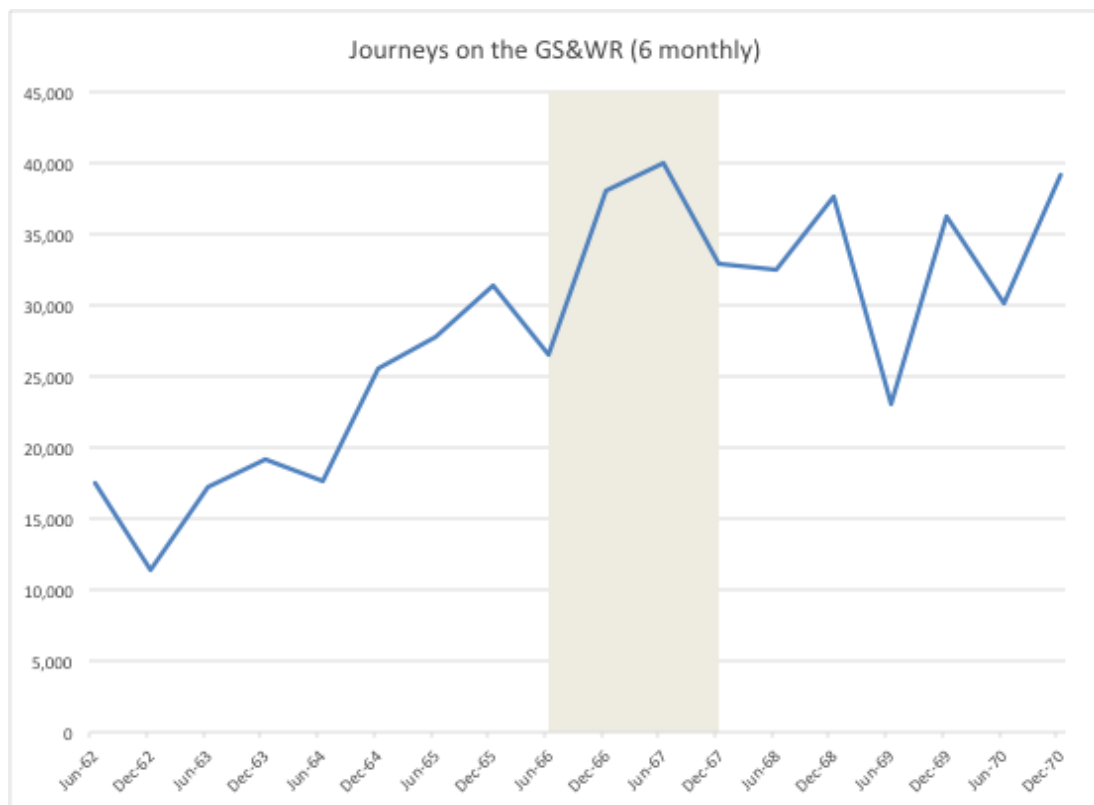
were provided by the GS&WR at a cost of five shillings per mile and Pilot Engines at the lower cost of two shillings per mile.¹⁹⁵

The bill from the GS&WR that the army had to bear rose dramatically, a reflection of the increased number of Special Trains, the expanded movement of troops with constant deployment changes, and the greater volume of military supplies carried by rail, all of which can be reconstructed from the company's records. Figure 3.6 below demonstrates a 253 per cent growth in military journeys on the GS&WR between the time of peace at the start of the decade and the period of dramatically increased activity during the Fenian crisis. Between late 1862 and the crisis of early 1867 the army's six-monthly expenditure on the GS&WR increased more than threefold, from £3,129 to £9,489. This was at a time when the annual militia training was suspended, which might have been expected to produce even higher levels of military activity on the railways. After the peak of activity in early 1867 the volume remained at a heightened level of activity for the rest of the decade, indicating a continued dependence on rail beyond the excitement of March 1867.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁵ 5 Jun. 1867. GS&WR Traffic Committee Minute Book No. 4, 13. Pilot Engines ran ahead of Special Trains to identify impediments on the track or sabotaged rails that might potentially derail troop or prisoner transports.

¹⁹⁶ Drawn from Directors' Reports (Half Yearly) in "Minutes of the Meetings of Shareholders" (2) June 1861-August 1873. CIE, GS&WR.

Figure 3.6 Number of Army Journeys on the GS&WR 1862-79



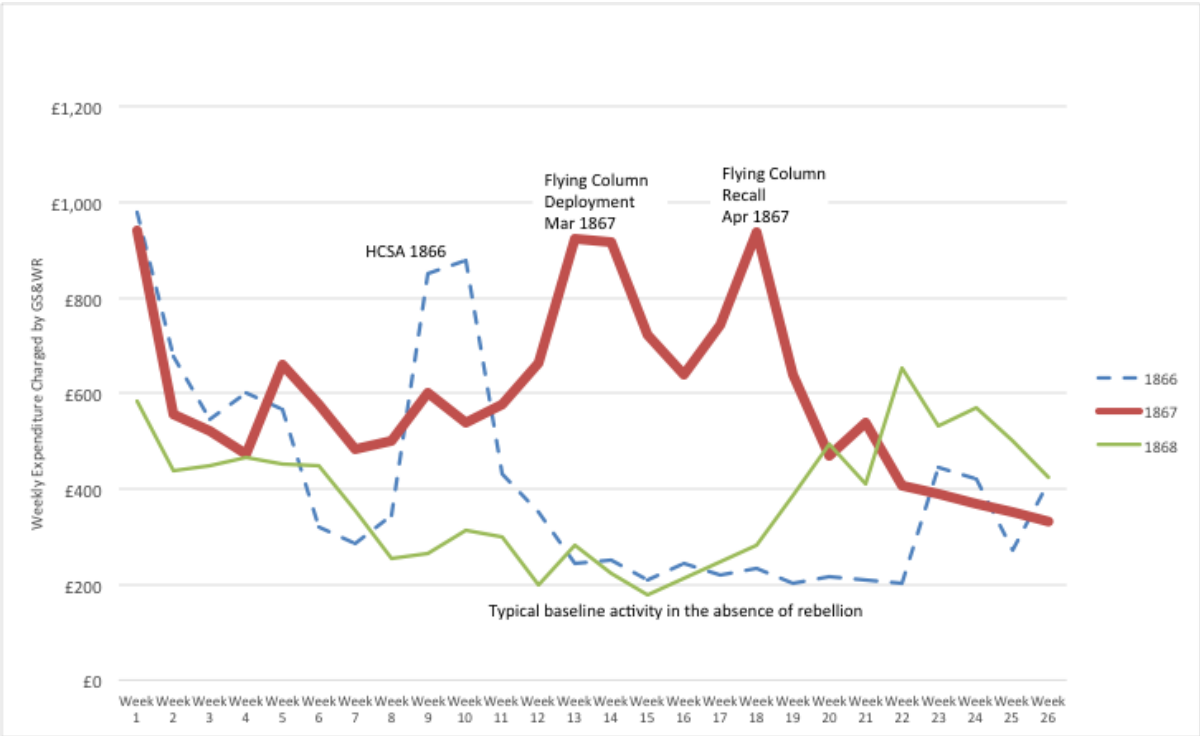
Source: Directors' Reports (Half Yearly) in "Minutes of the Meetings of Shareholders" June 1861-August 1873. CIE, GS&WR

To demonstrate their gratitude for the “energy and zeal” of the railway workers, “unsolicited and substantial” gratuities were given by the government to the railway staff. As G.R. Mahon noted, “All employees [on the GS&WR] got at least a week’s wages and station masters got from £5 to £15 each. In addition the Government gave £150 to be distributed among the officers of the railway.”¹⁹⁷ Some employees of the Midland Great Western Railway (MGWR) received gratuities, though the lower levels of Fenian activity in its area of operation meant these gratuities were both less frequent and of smaller amounts.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁷ Mahon, ‘Irish Railways in 1867’, 83.

¹⁹⁸ 15 May 1867. CIE, Midlands Great Western Railway of Ireland (MGWR). Proceedings of the Traffic Committee (No. 6), 278.

Figure 3.7. Soldiers' Warrants on the GS&WR (January to June, 1866-68)



Source: GS&WR Finance Committee Minute Books (11 & 12). January 1866- June 1868¹⁹⁹

An analysis of the impact on the railways due to the deployment of troops in more remote areas is also possible thanks to the detailed nature of the railway records. A week-by-week analysis of the use of “Soldiers’ Warrants” (the individual passes given to soldiers travelling on a given railway line) illustrates the dramatically increased volumes of travel at times of emergency. This is particularly relevant because during times of peace, when there was no immediately pressing reason to move troops around the country, infantry could be marched from barrack to barrack. When speed and efficiency was required, as in Killarney, the army turned to the railways. Figure 3.7 demonstrates that the reaction to the suspension of *Habeas Corpus* and the formation and recall of the Flying Columns correlate almost exactly with the periods of increased troop presence on the railways (bearing in mind the 7-10 days lag time in processing the Soldiers’ Warrant).

¹⁹⁹ Only the data for the first half of the 3 years is presented here, as the transport to and from the Curragh for Annual Manoeuvres in the second half of the year distorts the data considerably. Occasional weeks of missing data [7 in total] have been dealt with by taking an average value from the weeks immediately preceding and following the missing data.

Despite this large-scale use of the railways to facilitate counterinsurgency efforts, it is interesting to note that General Rose came to acknowledge that he had over-estimated the benefits of the railway. Writing to Sir Hugh Grant at the end of March 1867 Rose noted that

I confess that I believe, like most people, I attributed greater capacities to rail in this respect than its merit. That is to say it was invested with a sort of halo of overwhelming but undefined importance which seemed to supersede, in a great degree, the necessity of army, i.e. animal transport.²⁰⁰

The conclusion drawn, and a factor that was born in mind in the subsequent Army Transport Committee, was the necessity that “an army in the field *never being without* its own transport.”²⁰¹ This reinforces the views of the Duke of Wellington from 1848 and indicates just how pressing matters of internal transportation were to all counter-Fenian operations. The data also suggest that a mutually beneficial relationship existed between the army and the railway companies, to such a degree that by 1868 the GS&WR saw the distinct benefit in investing £200-£250 in a new railway siding in Kingsbridge Station specifically for “Military Traffic.”²⁰² For their part, the military recognized the need to formalize elements of the railway’s counterinsurgency functions by building a barracks adjacent to Limerick Junction railway station. This barracks would “in ordinary times” only house a wing of cavalry, but “the point is so important” argued Rose, that it should be constructed to accommodate far more men during times of insurrection.²⁰³

From Small Detachments to Flying Columns

As had sporadically been the case since the Act of Union, a rapidly changing military situation in March 1867 required a strategic pivot from the military authorities, and this resulted in the formation of what Rose called “Moveable” or “Flying Columns”. These were relatively small, independent military units capable of rapid deployment and mobility, manned by infantry, cavalry, and military

²⁰⁰ Prunty, ‘Military Barracks and Mapping in the Nineteenth Century: Sources and Issues for Irish Urban History’, 505–6.

²⁰¹ Prunty, 506.

²⁰² 13 Mar. 1868. CIE, GS&WR. Board Minute Book No. 10, 403. It should be noted that the siding was also intended for use at times of extra volume during the Punchestown race meetings.

²⁰³ Rose to Col. Somerset, 16 Jul. 1867. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,824, 113.

engineers. Crossman differentiates between the two forms, moveable and flying, with only the latter being accompanied by a Resident Magistrate; however the granting of Peace commissions to army officers in this period blurs the lines of Crossman's otherwise clean distinction. This problem is further compounded by the fact that flying column-type responses shifted between the civil and military administrations throughout the first half of the century, and indeed the military commanders (particularly Rose) used the terms interchangeably depending on the audience. The immediate aftermath the 1798 Rebellion, for example, had led Marquis Cornwallis to organize an early form of military column, with "three thousand light infantry... stationed at Athlone and in the environs of that place, in body of men superior."²⁰⁴ Ready to move in only five to six days, this force would have been highly dependent on sturdy supply chains, but was never tested in the field.

Two factors were essential for the provision of a timely and effective 'Flying Column' response. The first was an army infrastructure capable of providing the necessary resources, and the second was a cohort of officers with sufficient experience to marshal those resources effectively. The only modern treatment of this development is Townshend, Ó Broin and Crossman, but they approach the formation of Flying Columns in strictly military terms, rather than by viewing the columns as an expansion of the state's infrastructural power, with a strong political component in their formation and usage.²⁰⁵ Ó Broin framed his description of the columns by quoting Constable Joseph Murphy who argued that "They [the Irish farming classes and Fenians] see the unlimited resources of the vast Empire they thought to contend against, and are unanimous in saying that without the aid of America, it is rank folly for to take the field."²⁰⁶

Any analysis of Irish Flying Columns must be firmly rooted in an imperial context. In fact, one way of conceptualizing the introduction of Flying Columns to Ireland is to consider them as a microcosm of the imperial strategic imperatives

²⁰⁴ Marquis Cornwallis to Maj. Gen Ross. Phoenix Park, May 12, 1801. Charles Ross, *Correspondence of Charles, First Marquis Cornwallis* (Albemarle Street, London: John Murray, 1859), 361.

²⁰⁵ Ó Broin, *Fenian Fever*, 165; Townshend, *Political Violence in Ireland*, 91–95; Crossman, 'The Army and Law and Order in the Nineteenth Century', 365–67.

²⁰⁶ Ó Broin, *Fenian Fever*, 163.

permeating the military administration of Ireland. The shift from large imperial garrisons towards colonial self-reliance from the mid-1840s resulted in a vastly different conception of how the Army should operate globally. As Hew Strachan and Peter Burroughs have demonstrated, the relatively meagre size of the British Army meant it ran the risk of being spread too thinly to operate effectively. With the exception of India, the permanent garrisons were withdrawn and instead the Army was “concentrated at home and dispatched as expeditionary forces to trouble-spots as occasion arose.”²⁰⁷ As Alan Ramsey-Skelly has argued, “India especially left its mark in the development of tactics, the growth of a division within the officer corps, and the experiences particularly of the men in the ranks,” and this is borne out in the Irish context.²⁰⁸ As mentioned above, General Rose emerged from the Indian Mutiny as one of the premier commanders of the period, and it was in his organization and command of Flying Columns that he gained most notable attention, having “personally directed the attack and pursuit” tactics, and gaining the respect of his fellow officers and the troops under his command alike.²⁰⁹

Rose’s final action as the head of the Indian Army was during the Duar (Bhutan) War²¹⁰ in the winter and spring of 1864-5, where he was responsible for the pacification of the “Bootan [sic] Frontier,” a campaign undertaken by four Flying Columns whose size and structure might be considered as a template for action in Ireland, containing cavalry and infantry as well as sappers and miners.²¹¹ Despite a few minor defeats, the campaign’s successes were viewed in a particularly positive light because they showed the ‘native’ Indian Army operating at a level of efficiency and discipline unseen since the 1857 Mutiny. During this

²⁰⁷ Burroughs, ‘Imperial Defense and the Victorian Army’, 61; Strachan, ‘Lord Grey and Imperial Defence’, 9–11.

²⁰⁸ Skelly, *The Victorian Army at Home - The Recruitment and Terms and Conditions of the British Regular, 1859-1899*, 18.

²⁰⁹ Malleon, *Essays and Lectures on Indian Historical Subjects*, 414–16.

²¹⁰ The modern Kingdom of Bhutan lies in the Himalayas, to the north east of India on the Chinese border. It had been involved in a century-long conflict with the British East India Company and later the Indian Army that concluded with the signing of the Treaty of Sinchuala in Nov. 1865.

²¹¹ General Rose to Duke of Cambridge, 21 Dec. 1864. See also memo of Brig. Gen. Dunsford (enclosure) who commanded the “Left Column”, 7 Dec. 1864. Cam, BL. MRF 2316/17. The 4 columns consisted of: 3 officers & 140 men; 7 officers and 305 men; 4 officers and 160 men; and 2 officers and 104 men. Therefore 3 of the 4 columns had a roughly similar composition to the Irish columns, though not involving railroad transport.

campaign innovations such as the use of the “Armstrong Mountain Train” and mountain “mortar batteries” had proven useful in the suppression of fortified mountain positions.²¹² Jenkins dismisses Rose’s requests to acquire similar weapons for use in Ireland as “a string of excessive requests to the Horse Guards” designed to give him political cover.²¹³ In the immediate aftermath of the pursuit of Fenians in the Galtee mountains, the Duke of Cambridge acceded to Rose’s requests for just such an artillery allocation to Ireland, and this suggests some need need to re-evaluate Jenkins’ dismissal of Rose’s requests.²¹⁴

A period of transition between the use of small detachments and of formalized Flying Columns can be seen in the reaction to the brief rising in Killarney in mid-February 1867. This change involved a shift from defensive garrisoning to offensive penetration of the countryside in an effort to suppress insurgents’ movements.²¹⁵ With the exception of an attack on a Coastguard station at Kells on the Iveragh Peninsula, and of bands of insurgents moving between Killarney and Cahirciveen, very little threat actually emerged. But as Ó Broin notes, the news of the outbreak “caused a considerable stir in military circles.”²¹⁶ The Divisional Commander in Cork, General Cunynghame, instructed his second-in-command, General Bates, to send a detachment from Cork to Killarney, and to avail of Brigadier General Horsford’s expertise. Horsford, a former Brigade Commander at the fall of Lucknow in India, had just moved from the position of Deputy Adjutant General at Horse Guards to Ireland and had been briefly given divisional command briefly in Dublin, although the formation of a new “Athlone” or “Line of the Shannon” division was also contemplated specifically for him.²¹⁷

²¹² Rose to Duke of Cambridge, 21 Dec., 1864. Cam. MFR 2316/17. Gen Rose to Duke of Cambridge, 3 Dec., 1866. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,823, 1-6.

²¹³ Jenkins, *The Fenian Problem*, 73.

²¹⁴ Rose to Duke of Cambridge, 20 Apr. 1867. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,824, 42-3. See also; *Ibid.*, Rose to Sir A Horsford, 3 May 1867, ADD MS 42,824, 44-5, and *Ibid.*, Rose to Col. Gambier, ADD MS 42,824, 106-7. The Gambier correspondence is particularly interesting because it demonstrates that the Mountain Batteries proposed were considered directly as a result of their recent effectiveness in India.

²¹⁵ Larcom to Earl of Devon, 10 Mar. 1867. NLI, Larcom Papers. MS 7594. Quoted in Townshend, *Political Violence in Ireland*, 92.

²¹⁶ Ó Broin, *Fenian Fever*, 131.

²¹⁷ See, Rose to Duke of Cambridge, 10 Dec. 1866. BL, Rose Papers, ADD MS 42,823, 27-9.

Horsford “commandeered vehicles of all sorts at Limerick Junction” which allowed him the range of movement to cover all of Kerry.²¹⁸ The priorities of this requisition were twofold, the “protection and support of the Police in searching for areas in the disturbed district”, and “the protection of the Magnetic telegraph”, a key piece of imperial infrastructure.²¹⁹ Rather than risking open billets for this detachment, encampments were placed along the telegraph line itself. In reaction, Rose suggested, “Would it not be good to patrol the line, the suspected parts [Cahirciveen to Glencar], with cavalry and infantry combined at uncertain times, the detachment from different points meeting each other?”²²⁰ This was clearly designed to increase the effectiveness and perceived ubiquity of the army. Rose explained to the Duke of Cambridge that Horsford had “made repeated efforts to come up with them, but has not been able to do so.”²²¹ While no specific evidence has been found to explain the change, it might be speculated that the increased efficiency and organization of the later, formalized, columns may have been influenced by the difficulties experienced by the *ad hoc* Killarney column.

The formation of Flying Columns had clear implications for intelligence gathering. Not only was the government working off sketchy, often grossly over-inflated reports, but official communications also ran the risk of being monitored. Rose was quick to praise Horsford for the way in which he controlled the flow of information, commending him for his decision to instruct “the telegraph officials not to forward any sensational telegrams without showing them to you, or the Magistrates.”²²² This highlights the lack of trust that the Executive felt in the security of its own communications. Similarly, Rose bemoaned the refusal of telegraph clerks at Kingsbridge station to send messages relating to the “present insurrectionary state of the country because it is Sunday.”²²³ Fears of Fenian infiltration of the railway offices of which Rose was “informed by the Irish govt several times in ‘65 & ‘66” indicate the significance of control of the state’s

²¹⁸ Ó Broin, *Fenian Fever*, 131.

²¹⁹ Rose to Naas, 16 Feb. 1867. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,823, 169-70. See also, Memorandum of 15 Feb., 1867. NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 1731, 2506.

²²⁰ Rose to Horsford, 17 Feb. 1867. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,823, 180-1. Original Emphasis.

²²¹ Rose to Duke of Cambridge, 19 Feb. 1867. BL Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,823, 174-5.

²²² Rose to Horsford, 21 Feb. 1867. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,823, 192-3.

²²³ Rose to Naas, 10 Mar. 1867. BL Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,823, 244.

infrastructural apparatus, and of government concerns over its security.²²⁴ The government had threatened the immediate dismissal of guards on mail trains who “were found spreading lies.”²²⁵

The Flying Columns had both a military and civil purpose. They were required to act as an arm of the state, but also to be seen to do so in a politically palatable manner. Concerns about the way in which the public might view the columns meant that early proposals for their formation were rejected until the rising actually broke out. Writing to the Duke of Cambridge in December 1866, Rose noted that “Lord Naas says that he is entirely opposed to them [columns] as they would give rise to comment in parliament.”²²⁶ Townshend has argued that ultimately the Flying Columns were “scarcely needed” in a military sense, but this discounts their value as a means of projecting the state’s political power, and of demonstrating the potential strengths of the army in Ireland. That five additional columns supplemented the two initial columns indicates that both the Executive and the military command considered them an increasingly effective counterinsurgency tool. The speed and efficiency of their formation left Rose to comment, somewhat acerbically perhaps, “This will do for the House of Commons.”²²⁷

As suggested, the capabilities of the ‘Military Train’, the new organization responsible for army supplies in the field, were central to the ability to form Flying Columns. In February 1867 the Military Train in Ireland had a complement of 285 officers and men, but by the outbreak, a slight manipulation of the rotation (a possibly deliberate delay in the despatch of Troop #1 from Dublin to Aldershot) resulted in an increase to 19 Officers, 351 rank and file, and 212 horses.²²⁸ The additional resources were distributed between Dublin and the Curragh, significantly increasing the capability of the Military Train at the time of most need. At the outbreak of the rising, therefore, 20.5 per cent of the entire capacity of the British Army’s Military Train was engaged in Ireland, surpassing its deployment to

²²⁴ Rose to Naas, 10 Mar. 1867. BL Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,823, 244.

²²⁵ NAI, Fenian Papers, F. 2477, quoted in Ó Broin, *Fenian Fever*, 132.

²²⁶ Rose to Duke of Cambridge, 6 Dec. 1866. BL, Rose Papers, ADD MS 42,823, 18-20.

²²⁷ General Rose to Naas, 10 Mar. 1867. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,823, 248-9.

²²⁸ TNA, WO 73/8, Returns for Jan-March 1867.

the rest of the empire with the exception of the Home Station in England.²²⁹ Similarly, the number of men assigned to the Irish Commissariat Office experienced a 41 per cent increase, from 114 at the start of 1867 to 161 in early 1869, a recognition of the growing importance of the role it played, and also potentially of the stress endured by the office during the Fenian period.²³⁰

The link between the Military Train, the Commissariat and the troops in the field was evident to the senior commanders. As Rose wrote to Col. Curzon, the Military Secretary,

The best plan to put down Fenianism prevailing in certain districts and lines of country are "Moveable Columns" under selected officers; and the best R[esident] Magistrates. We will organize two at once. Pray call on the Officer Commanding Mil Train for a report as to what carriages he can furnish for 4 guns, 2 squads of Cavalry, 1 regiment of Infantry and on the Commissary General for a report how he can feed the same force.²³¹

The Commissariat responded "with much promptitude" to facilitate the necessary arrangements for four columns in Tipperary, Cork, Waterford, and Wicklow. Once Rose came to have more trust in the army's infrastructure, he boasted that he could provide a Thurles column in a mere "20 minutes."²³² Ultimately, seven columns were present in Ireland by the end of March, with the Thurles and Carlow columns formed by mid-month and one in Castlebar by month's end.²³³ As Rose explained to Naas, "I never remember so rapid an organization for service."²³⁴

The command and composition of the columns is significant. Each column required an accompanying magistrate, but Rose was adamant that only "selected and first rate" magistrates should be considered, hoping to avoid the kind of problems experienced during the Dungarvan by-election the previous year.²³⁵ The intermeshing of civil and military authority continued with Rose seeking magistrate commissions for all his commanding officers as well as General

²²⁹ Ibid. Figures drawn from "Summary of the Forces at Home and Abroad". The other significant detachment of Military Train was 4 Troop (275 all ranks) to New Zealand to support Army and Colonial Troops against the Mauri threat.

²³⁰ TNA, WO 73/8-10. Unfortunately, no more detailed breakdown of the Commissariat numbers appears to be available.

²³¹ Rose to Col. Curzon (Mil Sec), 7 Mar. 1867. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,823, 228.

²³² Rose to Naas, 9 Mar. 1867. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,823, 242-3.

²³³ Rose to Naas, 13 Mar. 1867. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,823, 256-7.

²³⁴ Rose to Naas, 10 Mar. 1867. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,823, 248.

²³⁵ Rose to Bates. 8 Mar. 1867. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,823, 235.

Horsford and Major Lind, commanding troops in Tipperary.²³⁶ These commissions of the Peace were issued by Larcom on 10 March.²³⁷ The command structure of the columns was as follows by mid-March:

- Tipperary Flying Column, under the command of Col. McNeill, VC, 48th Regiment
- Waterford Flying Column, under the command of Major Bell, 6th Regiment
- Cork Flying Column, under the command of Col. Oakes, 12th Lancers
- Thurles Flying Column, under the command of Col. Baker, 10th Hussars
- Clare Flying Column, under the command of Major Leonard Toby, 74th Highlanders
- Carlow Flying Column, under the command of Captain Godman, 5th Dragoon Guards.²³⁸

The variety in ranks of the column commanders, as well as the inclusion of both infantry and cavalry officers, indicates that Rose's meritocratic tendencies overrode appointment by seniority alone. Therefore, not only would these columns be able to "move with great rapidity wherever their services may be required" but they would also "afford much more substantial protection to the loyal and well-disposed than by stationing additional detachments in any particular place."²³⁹

That such details and intentions were so widely communicated and understood in the national and regional press indicates that the Columns had both an active role and a deterrent quality to their set-up. In tandem with this formation the Military Secretary wrote to Naas to inform him that Rose had approved of "calling out in certain districts of the enrolled pensioners who will not only increase the force with men knowing the country, but will [also] be kept from going wrong."²⁴⁰

Each column was to be provided with ten [rail] cars "to facilitate and accelerate their movement and for the same purpose with a detachment of Sappers and Miners" to remove obstacles and repair rails as they travelled."²⁴¹ They were also to coordinate with either each other or with local garrisons to "surprize and take between two or three files, in flank and rear and front" their target insurgents.²⁴² These columns, particularly the Thurles Column, often divided into eight smaller sub-columns to increase their effective reach. Description of soldiers

²³⁶ Rose to Naas, 9 Mar. 1867. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,823, 241.

²³⁷ Directions of the Under-Secretary, 10 Mar., 1867. NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 1732, 4000 & 4001.

²³⁸ Rose to Naas, 9 Mar 1867. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,823, 241. *Anglo-Celt*, 16 Mar. 1867. "The Military Arrangements".

²³⁹ *Anglo-Celt*, 16 Mar. 1867. "The Military Arrangements". *Ballinrobe Chronicle*, 16 Mar. 1867.

²⁴⁰ Col. Smyth to Naas, 9 Mar., 1867. NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 1732, 3994.

²⁴¹ Rose to Lord Hartington (former Sec of State for War and later Chief Secretary of Ireland (1871-4), 9 Mar. 1867. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,823, 245-6.

²⁴² Rose to Hartington (former Sec of State for War and later Chief Secretary of Ireland (1871-4), 9 Mar. 1867. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,823, 245-6.

who “jumped over the ditch bounding the side of the road, and ran with all speed through the field” in pursuit of armed Fenians, began to appear in local newspapers and gave the reader a sense of energetic action.²⁴³ This suggested that that they could function safely in a flexible operational environment, and justified Rose’s earlier hesitancy to employ small detachments in static locations without sufficient logistical support.

Once formed, it was Rose’s intention that the Columns would act as an irresistible force in the extension of the state’s power. Writing to Naas he argued that

The insurrection must be stamped out, and that too with unrelenting vigour and knowledge of the country; and I am sure that you will agree with me that whenever it shows itself, the authority of the govt and the Queen should at once be irresistibly asserted.²⁴⁴

Naas, however, had envisioned that the Columns would continue very much along the lines of an extended deterrent rather than as a mechanism of suppression of the remaining Fenian stragglers. In anticipation of a large Fenian meeting at the Hill of Tara, Naas wanted to allow the meeting to congregate before the arrival of the column. By contrast, Rose insisted that this was “incompatible” with the use of Flying Columns who should, instead, rapidly advance to the proposed site of the meeting from all directions, since marching in “skirmishing order” would more effectively apprehend the ‘dangerous’ Fenians involved.²⁴⁵

Assessment

The use of Flying Columns as a means of temporarily extending the infrastructural reach of the state is, therefore, important. As Rose explained to Lord Bessborough, the columns represented the “assertion of the power of the law” which “according to the reports of all the officers [had] a remarkable effect on the Fenians.”²⁴⁶ The columns “sudden appearance in different parts of the country where Troops have rarely been seen”, except when on furlough, had produced “the best possible

²⁴³ *Dundalk Democrat*, 23 March 1867.

²⁴⁴ Rose to Naas, 9 Mar. 1867 (12 noon). BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,823, 242-3.

²⁴⁵ Rose to Naas, 16 Mar. 1867. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,823, 263-4.

²⁴⁶ Rose to Bessborough, 20 Mar. 1867. BL, Rose Papers, ADD MS, 42,823, 286-9.

impression in reassuring the loyal and overawing the disaffected.”²⁴⁷ Although US Consul Eastman thought that “the weather has done more for Great Britain than her troops towards quelling this insurrection,” he went on to provide a detailed description of the composition and goals of the Flying Columns that “ride through the country where they hear Fenians are congregated, though up to the present they have not been able to see one.”²⁴⁸ Like Townshend, Eastman downplayed the military effectiveness of the Flying Columns. In the aftermath of the rising, however, Rose admitted to Colonel Shute that this was not a full reading of the situation. He discussed the intention to form a further Column to “traverse Wicklow, part of Kildare, and Wexford”, not on the grounds of military expediency but rather to allay the fears of the loyal inhabitants. They were not to be deployed to fight, “for there was nothing to fight, but to reassure the people who were much, and unnecessarily alarmed.”²⁴⁹ This is perfectly in line with the intentions of the Inspector General of Constabulary’s instruction to his sub-inspectors to maintain their presence during any potential rising by noting that, “it will be their duty to establish such a system of strong patrols, as will ensure the best information of what is passing between their quarters, and infuse, by their frequent presence, confidence throughout the surrounding country.”²⁵⁰

Rose’s clearest statement of the effectiveness of the columns was in explaining the difference between garrisoning and the use of columns, noting to the Duke of Devonshire that, “They [Flying Columns] effect a general whereas the permanent garrisons, without means of transport, and often of combination, only effect a partial good.”²⁵¹ Thus the assumption was that a large garrison of troops in the period before September 1865 provided a “partial good”; the move towards smaller detachments increased the reach of the state’s power, and the most “general” good, the extended reach of the state’s infrastructural power, could only be achieved by using Flying Columns. When they moved beyond the walls of the

²⁴⁷ Townshend, *Political Violence in Ireland*, 94.

²⁴⁸ Consul Eastman to Secretary of State Seward, 21 Mar. 1867. Dispatch No. 198. NARA, Despatches from United States Consuls in Cork, 1800-1906, Volume 6. T-196.

²⁴⁹ Rose to Col. Shute, 10 Apr. 1867. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,824, 32-3.

²⁵⁰ Secret and Confidential Memorandum of Inspector General John Stewart Wood, 1 Jan., 1866. NLI, Mayo Papers, MS 43,887/2. Article 19.

²⁵¹ Rose to Duke of Devonshire, 16 Mar. 1867. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS, 42,823, 267-9.

barracks and parade grounds into previously inaccessible areas of the country their relative effectiveness increased dramatically. In Mann's terms, they equalized the "subnational variations of power" in a way that was unprecedented in Ireland. The use of Flying Columns was clearly conceived of and implemented along lines analogous with Mann's description of infrastructural power as "the capacity of the state actually to penetrate civil society, and to implement logistically political decisions throughout the realm."²⁵² In quoting from a memorandum drawn up in the aftermath of the rising, Crossman highlighted how the rapid movement of the troops allowed them to demonstrate "their mastery of and the undisputed right of the Government to the country, whilst the insurgents there who had asserted so continually that it would and must be theirs were compelled to seek humiliating concealment and flight."²⁵³

Doctrine

The Flying Columns produced a temporary increase in the state's infrastructural power, but it might also be argued that the codification of those practices helped the 'Bureaucratic State' to affect a more long-term expansion of that power. *Orders and Regulations for the Army Serving in Ireland* were first issued during the Tithe War of the 1830s, but their scope was expanded in the 1840s.²⁵⁴ This new incarnation entitled '*General Orders for the Guidance of the Troops in Affording Aid to the Civil Power and to the Revenue Department of Ireland*' ('Orders' hereafter) was issued in 1847, before the Young Ireland rising, and therefore was not specifically designed to contribute towards counterinsurgency.²⁵⁵ The *Orders* were the collective responsibility of the Commander of the Forces in Ireland and his Deputy Adjutant General (DAG) and are the closest contemporary statement of what would now be termed "military doctrine" applicable to Ireland under the

²⁵² Ibid. Michael Mann, "The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and Results," *European Journal of Sociology / Archives Européennes de Sociologie* 25, no. 02 (1984): 185.

²⁵³ Memorandum, 4 Apr. 1867. NLI, Kilmainham Papers, MS 1059, 371, quoted in Crossman, "The Army and Law and Order in the Nineteenth Century", 366.

²⁵⁴ Hussey Vivian and George D'Aguilar, *Orders and Regulations for the Army Serving in Ireland* (Dublin: George and John Grierson, 1832).

²⁵⁵ Blakeney and Napier, 'General Orders for the Guidance of the Troops in Affording Aid to the Civil Power in Ireland'. After the disbanding of the Revenue Police in 1856, the final clause in the title was simply omitted. For other examples of the changing discrepancies between pre and post Union Ireland see; Charles Mathew Clode, *The Administration of Justice Under Military and Martial Law* (Albemarle Street, London: John Murray, 1874).

Union.²⁵⁶ Although Hoppen correctly argues that these orders were “high on theory and low on utility”, his assertion that they “changed little after 1832” requires significant re-evaluation.²⁵⁷

A close reading of the changes between the 1847 orders, written by General Edward Blakeney and his DAG General Napier, and those of General Rose and his DAG Col. Mackenzie in 1870, illustrates a shift in the conceptualization of the role of the army “in aid of the civil power.”²⁵⁸ While many of the passages are reproduced verbatim, the 1870 version includes an entire section completely absent in the previous iterations. The passage entitled *Special Rules applicable to the General Purpose, viz: To oppose armed insurrection or rebellion*, was designed to aid officers who, “without the presence of a Magistrate, are in command of troops acting in time of open rebellion or insurrection.”²⁵⁹ This section emerged directly from the necessity to deal with Fenianism, having originally appeared as an addendum to the 1847 *Orders* and approved by the Irish government in 1865.²⁶⁰ The “urgency of the case” in March 1867 resulted in the new instructions being printed for immediate circulation to officers in the field for inclusion in their pocket-sized copy of the *Orders*.²⁶¹ This was specifically drafted to provide guidance to officers who found themselves dealing with the following situations:

1. As to bodies of men engaged in rebellions or insurrectionary proceedings
2. If such persons offer forcible resistance to the troops
3. If parties are found attacking persons or houses
4. If persons engaged in treasonable or felonious practices endeavour to escape from pursuit.²⁶²

These requirements were then formalized within the 1870 instructions, reducing, though perhaps not eliminating, Ireland’s anomalous position within army

²⁵⁶ For an example of current doctrine in a similar form see US Army, Field Manual FM 3-24 “Counterinsurgency”

²⁵⁷ Hoppen, *Elections, Politics, and Society in Ireland, 1832-1885*, 414.

²⁵⁸ Strathnairn and Mackenzie, ‘General Orders for the Guidance of the Troops in Affording Aid to the Civil Power in Ireland’; Blakeney and Napier, ‘General Orders for the Guidance of the Troops in Affording Aid to the Civil Power in Ireland’.

²⁵⁹ Strathnairn and Mackenzie, ‘General Orders for the Guidance of the Troops in Affording Aid to the Civil Power in Ireland’, 21–23.

²⁶⁰ See Rose to Naas, 29 Dec. 1866. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS, 42,823, 69-71.

²⁶¹ Mil. Sec. Smyth to Sec of State for War, 19 Mar. 1867. NLI, Kilmainham Papers (Kil). MS 1059, 294.

²⁶² “Instructions for Officers Commanding Troops unaccompanied by a Magistrate”. From instructions originally issued by Naas, Dublin Castle, 8 Mar. 1867. Insert in NLI, Kil. MS 1059, 250-1.

regulations. This is indicative of the direct impact that Fenianism had on the development of British Army doctrine in Ireland, with those new elements remaining in drafts that were subsequently used when dealing with the agrarian violence of the Land League in the late 1870s and early 1880s.

Charles Townshend has also considered the legal difficulties faced by “Her Majesty’s troops, in execution of their duty.”²⁶³ He concluded that the legal wrangling between Westminster, the English Law Officers, and the Irish Executive were inconclusive and that, “there was to be no permanent codification of emergency powers.”²⁶⁴ The 1870 instructions, however, offer specific guidance on the very issues highlighted by Townshend, such as outlining a suitable rate at which escalation in the use of force would be permitted. This varied from the desire to “disperse them [the insurgents] and arrest as many as possible, especially the leaders”, to the use of “any amount of force necessary to overpower” those who offer “forcible resistance to the troops”, and ultimately to the assertion that

If parties are found in the act of attacking persons or houses, they should at once be prevented by the military, who will be justified in using all force necessary for the purpose.²⁶⁵

So while no legislative expression of emergency powers had been made, these originally *ad hoc* set of practical instructions can be viewed to have at least bridged the gap between the *etat de siège* and the habitual recourse to coercion in Ireland. This notwithstanding, Rose continually urged for further formalization of this process, arguing that,

The acts and legislation of the government become a farce. No reasonable man in Parliament could object to a short act of Parliament, which without curtailing the rights of good, would arrest Treason in its worst shape and bring to justice its authors.²⁶⁶

No such legislation was immediately introduced, but as has been noted, the *Habeas Corpus Suspension (Ireland) Act* remained in place until the end of the decade and, once reinstated, was followed up with numerous Coercion Acts in the 1870s.

²⁶³ Townshend, *Political Violence in Ireland*, 96.

²⁶⁴ Townshend, 98.

²⁶⁵ Strathnairn and Mackenzie, ‘General Orders for the Guidance of the Troops in Affording Aid to the Civil Power in Ireland’, 23–24. My emphasis.

²⁶⁶ Rose to Bessborough, 2 Mar. 1867. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,823, 216-7.

The importance of such regulations must also be considered in a transnational context, particularly in light of the rotation of officers and men between the home countries and the wider empire. Townshend's insistence that the Indian Mutiny was seen as "a special case which was not seen as falling under martial, or any other, law" means that the search for doctrinal parallels is somewhat problematic.²⁶⁷ The surviving, but informally assembled Indian orders of the first half of the century resemble aspects the Irish 1832 Orders, but no similar counterinsurgency section appears to have been issued in the aftermath of the Indian Mutiny.²⁶⁸ British North America, however, presents a clearer comparison because instructions there were issued almost contemporaneously with the Irish orders and with similar goals in mind. David Facey-Crowther has argued that, while garrisoning remained the primary function of the British Army in Upper and Lower Canada, its secondary role, in aid of the civil power, was also highly significant. In the period between 1832 and 1871, the "civil authorities effectively transferred to the military the major responsibility for upholding public order."²⁶⁹ The first *General Orders* issued by the military commanders in Montreal giving detailed instructions on how officers should interact with the civil powers appeared in May 1837.²⁷⁰ Although not published or formatted in the same manner, the "unofficial guidelines for working with the civil authorities", which had been in practice for a century, became formalized with the *Queen's Regulations and Orders for the Army* of 1857.²⁷¹ This broadly parallels the Irish experience, though without the benefit of a developed national constabulary system, which was "virtually non-existent in much of British North America until the mid-1850s."²⁷² A detailed comparison of these orders might yield interesting insights into the application of military power in the empire.

²⁶⁷ Charles Townshend, 'Martial Law: Legal and Administrative Problems of Civil Emergency in Britain and the Empire, 1800-1940', *The Historical Journal* 25, no. 1 (March 1982): 168. Footnote 6.

²⁶⁸ A Staff Officer, *Revised Index of All General Orders from 1800 to 1839 Inclusive, Which Have Not Been Rescinded or Become Obsolete* (Madras: J.B. Pharoah, 1841). This is a collection of remaining orders, that do not appear to have been conceived of as a unified document in the same way as the Irish orders were compiled.

²⁶⁹ Facey-Crowther, 'The British Army and Aid to the Civil Power in British North America, 1832-1871', 311.

²⁷⁰ Facey-Crowther, 320. See Library Archives Canada, RG8 Vol. 316 pp 162-3.

²⁷¹ Facey-Crowther, 315-16.

²⁷² Facey-Crowther, 313.

The existence of *General Orders* was deemed acceptable in Ireland and around the empire, but was never adopted in Great Britain. When, on foot of the usefulness of the order in Ireland, a parallel model was proposed to the Home Office, it was rejected out of hand. A legal opinion of early 1868 suggested that “similar instructions should not be issued in England, unless there is deemed to be a probability of troops coming into collision with civilians acting in numbers and with force, in treasonable or felonious enterprise when such troops are not called out by requisition of or accompanied by a Magistrates.”²⁷³ This further highlights the already evident disparity in military administration between the two islands. In the event that such regulations would be required in Britain, “we would suggest that the nature of the emergencies should be defined to which the desired regulations or instructions are to be applicable”, suggesting increased discretionary powers on the part of the military administrators in Britain.²⁷⁴ In Ireland, however, the need for periodic refinement of the *Orders* demonstrated the value of the codification of the state’s infrastructural power.

* * *

Considerations of how other army resources were managed in the immediate aftermath of the rising could also be considered in transnational terms. As with the general imperial trends, where regiments were rotated through difficult tropical postings to avoid the perception of favouritism towards any individual commanding officer, there remained a pressing need to be seen to equalize the heavy burden of dealing with the Fenians within Ireland. Special consideration was given to the placement of the 21st, 85th, and 92nd regiments, some of whom had done “hard garrison duties for 15 months” in Ireland.²⁷⁵ The ability to redeploy regiments within Ireland also served to curb further attempts at Fenian infiltration into the Army. As with the 61st regiment that was removed from Canada on foot of fears of Fenian infiltration, the 21st and 26th Regiments, both of which had “many Dublin men in their ranks” and who had been “for the last 6 Months in the worst

²⁷³ Continuation of Opinion No.172. 18 Jan.,1868. TNA, HO 45/7799, 354.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ Rose to Gen Cunynghame, 3 Jul. 1867. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,824, 97.

and most Fenian quarter of Dublin”, were scheduled to move to the more salubrious environment of the Curragh.²⁷⁶ Both domestic and imperial troop rotations, a combination of formal policy and *ad hoc* actions, therefore, were useful tools for managing the uneven stresses and strains that fell upon certain regiments due to their counterinsurgency roles, demonstrating for the first time the level of coordination required for successful suppression of the Fenians.

Similarly, the continued use of flying columns was neither politically palatable nor militarily sustainable. The withdrawal of the columns at the end of March 1867 presented another set of political and military problems for the Irish Executive. As Naas noted to Lord Lieutenant Abercorn,

As the flying columns are now coming in, you must now consider as to the detachments – it is absolutely impossible to leave the South of Ireland without a very large number of troops being quartered in different parts of the Country. I think it will be necessary to settle at once where these detachments are to be placed for if the Flying Columns are withdrawn and nothing done to replace them, we shall have another outcry and much alarm.²⁷⁷

Therefore, the manner of the return to the use of garrisons became of central importance to the maintenance of internal order. As Figure 3.1 and Maps 3.3-3.7 illustrate, the period after March 1867 saw a continuation of the widespread dispersal of troops, even at a time when troop numbers were gradually being reduced. Both the number of detachments and the average size of those detachments remained at a level far closer to the March 1867 numbers than the pre-Fenian level. This suggests that while the peak of the state’s infrastructural power projection occurred in the direct aftermath of the rising, the state was decidedly slower to relinquish that power.

The actions of the Manchester Martyrs and the impact of the Clerkenwell explosion in the second half of 1867 had significant consequences for Ireland and they influenced the two significant strategic considerations that justified the continuation of the heightened army presence and vigilance. General Rose raised concerns in October 1867 and explained that one interpretation of recent events

²⁷⁶ Rose to Col. Somerset, 2 Jul. 1867. BL Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,824, 95-6.

²⁷⁷ Naas to Abercorn, 25 Mar. 1867. PRONI, Abercorn Papers. T2541/VR/85/12.

was that the Fenians had “transferred their machinations for a time to England” as a “feint” to distract attention away from Ireland.²⁷⁸ He warned that increased alarm and activity in England may have been deliberately undertaken to force the “removal of troops from Ireland to England with a view to attempt [a] fresh rising in Ireland, when denuded of a considerable portion of its garrison.”²⁷⁹ With the constabulary functions of the army continually tested by the numerous mock funerals for the Manchester Martyrs taking place throughout the country, Ireland remained securitized for well over a year after the failed rising. Attempts to withdraw troops at the start of 1868 exacerbated the already strained civil/military relations. As Naas complained to Abercorn, “Lord Strathnairn’s unfortunate and sudden withdrawal of the Troops has, like everything he does, thrown many obstacles in our way.”²⁸⁰ These augmented army actions, while effective, were not without their repercussions for the administration as a whole.

²⁷⁸ Rose to Duke of Cambridge, 6 Oct. 1867. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,824, 157-9.

²⁷⁹ Rose to Duke of Cambridge, 20 Oct. 1867. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,824, 162-4.

²⁸⁰ Mayo to Abercorn. 4 Jan, 1868. PRONI, Abercorn Papers. T2541/VR/85/36.

Chapter 4 – “Simmering Discontent in the Ranks”: The Irish Militia and the Fenian Conspiracy

Why were not the Irish militia called out to go through their ordinary course of training? Because it was thought that once trained, armed, and equipped, they might disown all allegiance to the Government, and become the nucleus of an Irish national army. Why were not the Irish, like the English and Scotch, allowed to enroll themselves as Volunteers? Because it was feared that, once enrolled and armed, they might endeavour to obtain by force of arms the concession of demands which had been refused to years of persevering and dutiful supplication.¹

Speaking in Westminster almost exactly a year after the abortive Fenian rising, The O’Donoghue, MP for Tralee, thus articulated the commonly accepted reasons behind the cancellation of training for the Irish Militia that continued from 1866 to 1871. While this cancellation highlights the obvious disparity between the governance of Ireland and the rest of the UK, the reasons for it were more complex than The O’Donoghue acknowledged. The Militia had many functions. These included both imperial and home defence, and even when not embodied, the Militia occupied a strong social and economic position in Ireland. Where discussion of the “amateur military tradition” has predominantly focussed on periods of militia activity, this chapter expands its perspective to consider the importance of the fallow periods experienced by the militia. It also seeks to expand the current historiography’s view that auxiliaries simply provided a “direct link between the army and society”, arguing that the regimental staff of the Irish Militia created a special environment where administrative and military veterans could interact in a unique manner.²

Ostensibly, this chapter charts a non-event. When dealing with the politics of deterrence and prevention, however, it is the administrative arithmetic that resulted in the ‘null set’ (or the successfully deterred action) that gains most significance. This chapter is as concerned with process behind the cancellation of

¹ HC Deb. 13 Mar., 1868. Vol. 190, cc 1595-1675.

² William Butler, *The Irish Amateur Military Tradition in the British Army, 1854-1992* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 1.

militia training as it is with the consequence and difficulties arising from a lack of militia activity. It also sets out to highlight the degree to which the Irish Militia can be viewed as a point of intersection between Ireland's civilian and military administrations. In general terms its regiments were commanded by the gentry, manned by the working class and staffed by retired military veterans. They were under the direct authority of the Irish Lord Lieutenant, but paid for by the War Office. As such, even through fallow periods, the Militia provides insight into the operations of the Victorian state in Ireland.

As will be demonstrated, at the height of the Fenian conspiracy the training of the Irish Militia was postponed for both military and political reasons. The lack of widespread action, however, tends to obscure the significance of its position within the mind-set of both governors and governed as a medium through which an insurrection might be initiated, intensified, deterred, or suppressed. This chapter argues that inaction or inactivity does not equate with insignificance. If, as numerous historians have argued, the Volunteers and the Yeomanry in Ireland during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were "the military expression of two rival nations" in two organizations, then the coexistence of loyalism and nationalism within the Irish Militia in the 1860s can be viewed as two nations vying for expression within one organization, ensuring a previously unacknowledged significance in terms of counterinsurgency responses.³

Context

The "amateur military tradition" in Ireland has attracted considerable historiographic attention. This attention, however, usually glosses over the mid-Victorian period, focussing instead on the forces active in the late eighteenth or the early twentieth centuries. In Ireland, the amateur tradition had developed along two competing, often parallel, lines, with different Protestant and Catholic

³ Ian Beckett, ed., *Citizen Soldiers and the British Empire, 1837-1902* (London: Pickering & Chatto Ltd, 2012), 7; Allan Blackstock, *An Ascendancy Army: The Irish Yeomanry, 1796-1834* (Ireland: Four Courts Press, 1998); Allan Blackstock, "Trajectories of Loyalty and Loyalism in Ireland, 1793-1849", in *Loyalism and the Formation of the British World, 1775-1880*, ed. Frank O'Gorman and Allan Blackstock (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer Ltd, 2014), 108; Neal Garnham, *The Militia in Eighteenth-Century Ireland: In Defence of the Protestant Interest* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2012), 1-3.

manifestations. The Protestant 'Volunteer' tradition had numerous incarnations, including the Irish Militia and Volunteers (1715-92), the Irish Yeomanry (1796-1834) and the later Ulster Volunteer Force (1913-14). The more limited Catholic involvement centred on participation in, but not domination of, the Irish Militia (1793-1816), and its later post-1854 formation. As Allan Blackstock has argued for the first half of the nineteenth century, "Catholics could still join the militia, but these regiments, particularly from southern counties, were seen as Catholic counterparts to the yeomanry."⁴

The Volunteer Militia raised in 1715 only accepted Protestant recruits between the ages of 16 and 60, and was expected to contend "not only with the possibility of foreign invasion, but also with the prospective threat of domestic rebellion, and even subversion from within."⁵ But from 1793 onwards, a theoretically non-sectarian militia, formed along English lines, provided for national defence while still serving as a "nursery for the regulars", a function that would continue up until the World War One.⁶ The 1793 incarnation of the Irish Militia involved dual domestic and imperial functions. These duties were described by one regimental historian as, "First, to be ready to undertake home garrison duty, and, if necessary, take the field against an invading force; secondly, to draw from the counties those whom the blandishments of the regular recruiting sergeant cannot reach, and, by giving them a taste of military life, lead them to adopt the profession of arms," although the weighting of these dual responsibilities varied in line with the international situation.⁷

Opinions regarding the loyalty and efficiency of both the 1793 and subsequent incarnations of the Irish Militia vary. Inconsistent levels of training and the possibility of sectarian difficulties ensured that it "remained a questionable military asset for much of its existence", particularly during the riots caused by the

⁴ Blackstock, 'Trajectories of Loyalty and Loyalism in Ireland, 1793-1849', 108.

⁵ Neal Garnham, 'The Establishment of a Statutory Militia in Ireland, 1692-1716: Legislative Processes and Protestant Mentalities', *Historical Research* 84, no. 224 (May 2011): 268.

⁶ Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffery, eds., *A Military History of Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 268.

⁷ Henry Richey, *A Short History of the Royal Longford Militia, 1793-1893. Edited and compiled by Henry Alexander Richey.* (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis, & Co, 1894). Preface.

use of the ballot system (an early form of military conscription) in the 1790s.⁸ It was a largely Catholic force that was perceived to be defending the Protestant hierarchy, causing W.H. Goodenough to argue that many of its regiments were liable to disaffection.⁹ Bowman and Butler, on the other hand, argue that in the 1790s it “remained relatively immune to United Irishman infiltration”, citing its role in repelling the French under General Humbert as evidence.¹⁰ The passage of the Militia Interchange Act in 1811 illustrated the continuing desire of the War Office to ensure that Irish Militia units might serve outside Ireland whenever possible, avoiding potential conflicts of interest and split loyalties among militia units that might be employed to suppress political and agrarian violence, a factor that continued to be significant during, and beyond, the Fenian Conspiracy. As Bartlett and Jeffrey have demonstrated, during the nineteenth century “there was a general rule that Irish soldiers could not be relied upon in civil disturbances in Ireland and that they were better deployed against English or Scottish trouble-makers”, a view of the regular army that certainly extended to the amateur tradition.¹¹ The volunteer movement in Britain grew dramatically in the mid-Victorian period, but despite the attempted interventions of numerous Irish MPs, the government “determined that too many risks would be run by permitting the raising of new volunteer corps in Ireland.”¹² This disparity of treatment had exercised Wodehouse long before his appointment as Lord Lieutenant, as in September 1861 when he bemoaned the lack of Irish Rifle Volunteers at a meeting of the North Walsham Rifle Corps.¹³

The Irish Yeomanry existed from 1796 until 1834, overlapping substantially with the 1793 militia. This Yeomanry was a distinctly sectarian force, but should be seen as more than merely the Orange Order in arms. Rather, it was “a channel through which such [anti-Catholic] attitudes could travel and manifest

⁸ Timothy Bowman and William Butler, ‘Ireland’, in *Citizen Soldiers and the British Empire, 1837-1902*, ed. Ian Beckett (London: Pickering & Chatto Ltd, 2012), 42.

⁹ Goodenough, *The Army Book for the British Empire, A Record of the Development and Present Composition of the Military Forces and Their Duties in War and Peace*, 363.

¹⁰ Bowman and Butler, ‘Ireland’, 42.

¹¹ Bartlett and Jeffery, “Introduction”, *A Military History of Ireland*, 15.

¹² Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 294.

¹³ Powell and Kennedy, ‘Lord Kimberley and the Foundation of Liberal Irish Policy’, 94.

themselves.”¹⁴ Its military importance was greatest during the invasion threats of the early years of the Napoleonic wars, but it was also seen as a force capable of ensuring order and preventing internal insurrection, a role superseded with the formation of the Irish Constabulary in 1822. The Yeomanry’s diminishing use in the early 1830s led Viceroy Anglesey to initiate a “progressive dismantling” and the eventual disbanding of the Irish Yeomanry.¹⁵ In the Commons, Daniel O’Connell noted caustically that if the Yeomanry were maintained, “the King’s troops would be required to defend the people against the Yeomanry,” indicating just how widespread the perception of sectarian difficulties arising from the Yeomanry had become.¹⁶ By 1834, therefore, Ireland had no active auxiliary military force, with the Militia having entered a state of “suspended animation” from 1816.¹⁷ This chapter, however, suggests that the decades between 1816 (for the Militia) and 1834 (for the Yeomanry) and 1854 represents not a period of total “suspended animation”, but rather a time during which the social function of the Militia outweighed its previous military value.

The formation of armed Catholic groups (beyond Fenianism or Ribbonism) was not unheard of at times of need. During both the 1858 and 1864 Belfast Riots, meetings were held “proposing that Belfast Catholics should formally organize and even arm themselves for communal defence” against the Orangemen.¹⁸ While in Canada Catholic priests sought to form militia units in the hope that “it would help Protestant-Catholic relations” in anticipation of future Fenian invasion, the religious divides in the Irish Militia remained problematic in the middle of the century.¹⁹

¹⁴ Blackstock, *An Ascendancy Army*, 276.

¹⁵ Alan Blackstock, “A Forgotten Army; The Irish Yeomanry” *History Ireland*, Vol. 4, Winter 1996.

¹⁶ Army Estimates Debate. HC Deb., 10 Mar. 1834. Vol. 21, cc 1372.

¹⁷ Bowman and Butler, ‘Ireland’, 41.

¹⁸ Miller and Mac Suibhne, ‘Frank Roney and the Fenians: A Reappraisal of Irish Republicanism in 1860s Belfast and Ulster’, 47–48. Denis Holland was Belfast’s principal Catholic-Nationalist journalist in the 1850s. Andrew McKenna was the editor of the Catholic newspaper, the *Ulster Observer*. McKenna was supported by William McCoy, a local shopkeeper and publican, in his attempts to organize the meeting.

¹⁹ Fr. James Hobin to Bishop John Joseph Lynch, 22 Feb., 1865. Archives of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto. Auxiliary Records, Diocese of St. Catherine’s Fonds, File 1, Item SC AE01.15.

Militia and society

The Irish Militia provided the most obvious intersection between Ireland's civil and military administrations at a regional level. Locally, this is exemplified in the command of the County Clare Militia whose officer cohort in 1865 contained 2 MPs, 3 Deputy Lords Lieutenant, and 7 Justices of the Peace. This pattern was reflected throughout the country, albeit on a lesser scale, with the Irish Militia officer corps including 11 Earls, 8 Marquises, 15 MPs, 9 County Lords Lieutenant, 26 Deputy Lords Lieutenant and 70 Justices of the Peace.²⁰ The prevalence of so many County and Deputy Lords Lieutenant is particularly noteworthy when considering the extension of the state's infrastructural power, given that these positions were established in 1831 "to act as a medium of communication between the government and the counties."²¹ In most instances the officer corps were largely drawn from the local area, with regiments such as the Louth Militia and the North Cork Rifles containing 100 per cent and 92 per cent Irish-born officers respectively.²² The inverse also applied, as the militia provided a place of semi-retirement for officers returning from service abroad in the regular army, 165 of who held commissions in the Irish Militia in 1865. These officers usually served on the permanent staff, with 39 of the 44 regiments presented in *Hart's Army and Militia List* for that year having Adjutants (responsible for much of the day-to-day running of the Regiment) who had formerly served in the British or Indian Army. (See Appendix E). In an attempt to imbue the Belfast municipal police with a degree of military discipline, Captain Eyre Massey Shaw of the North Cork Rifle Militia was appointed in 1860 to train the Belfast 'Bulkies' in "battalion drill", to accustom them to "acting in unison", illustrating yet another important role undertaken by militia.²³

The status of its officers remained high, even when regiments lay fallow or when the officers in question lacked ability or suitable experience. During periods of inactivity the landed gentry, who wanted to stand out at the vice-regal court and

²⁰ Drawn from data in H.G. Hart, *The New Annual Army List, and Militia List for 1865*, vol. 26 (London, Albermarle Street: John Murray, 1865), 672–80.

²¹ Crossman, *Politics, Law and Order in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, 57. These positions replaced the County Governors, but fulfilled many of the same roles.

²² Bowman and Butler, 'Ireland', 44.

²³ Griffin, *The Bulkies: Police and Crime in Belfast, 1800-1865*, 136.

elsewhere, “obtained commissions in the force for the sake of the uniform.”²⁴ One particularly striking example of this phenomenon can be seen with Naas himself, who was commissioned as a captain in the Kildare Militia in December 1840. This regiment was commanded by his great-uncle, but the commission was considered more as a “social appointment than a military one.”²⁵ This resulted in the somewhat anachronous situation where the twenty-three year old Richard Bourke (as he then was), observing the 56,000 strong army manoeuvres of the Russian Imperial Army in the company of Czar Nicholas in 1845, where he “bore the uniform of the Kildare Militia bravely”, despite his self-professed ignorance of military matters.²⁶ Similarly, in 1867 Lord Claud Hamilton, Conservative MP for Tyrone and Lieutenant Colonel of the Donegal Militia, went to extensive lengths to obtain permission from the War Office to wear his uniform, and ultimately wrote personally to Bourke, now Chief Secretary, to secure the Irish Government’s approval.²⁷ In the situation where a militia colonel was no longer fit for service, he was often granted permission to remain as the “Honorary Colonel” of the Regiment, “ceasing to draw pay and relinquishing all right of interference in the Regimental details”, but who could aid in the recruiting drives of the regiment – a particularly important function as during Crimean War recruitment.²⁸

The Militia had a powerful hold on the Irish imagination, evidenced by its centrality to Grey Porter’s vision of a post-union Ireland. Porter, the son of the Protestant Bishop of Clogher, produced a widely distributed pamphlet called *Some Calm Observations Upon Irish Affairs*.²⁹ He asserted “that a strong and *bone fide* militia – [for] the proper defence of a free country – should be set on foot and kept up in Ireland.” This force, along with “a few cavalry to please the women at reviews”, was a prerequisite for Ireland holding a federalized position within the

²⁴ Henry Alexander Richey, *A Short History of the Royal Longford Militia, 1793-1893* (Dublin, Hodges Figgis Ltd., 1894), 72.

²⁵ Pottinger, *Mayo: Disraeli’s Viceroy*, 16.

²⁶ Pottinger, 22.

²⁷ Lord Claud Hamilton to Naas. 18 Sept., 1867. NLI, Mayo Papers, MS 43,844/7.

²⁸ See for example, Lord Sligo’s application to Horseguards for position of Honorary Colonel of the South Mayo Militia, 1 Nov., 1855. CSORP 1855, Box 736, 9753.

²⁹ John Grey V. Porter, *Some Calm Observation Upon Irish Affairs" A Plan of Fair Political Union between the Islands of Great-Britain and Ireland* (Dublin, London: Martin Keene, Fisher, 1844).

United Kingdom.³⁰ The English press responded with “an inarticulate clamour”, the *Chronicle* claiming that Porter’s “treason was worse than the worst of the monster meetings.”³¹ While not entirely committing to every detail of Porter’s manifesto, E. B. Roche³² agreed that a national militia was needed to bring Ireland’s position into line with that of other nations, noting that “the position is a noble and bold one – it is this: that Ireland ought to be defended by her own sons – that as France has her national guard – as America has its militia, and England has its yeomanry, Ireland ought also to have a national militia.”³³ The idea gained sufficient momentum for *The Nation* to undertake its own survey of the international militia situation, concluding highly speculatively that Ireland could sustain a militia of 200,000 in peacetime and 400,000 in wartime.³⁴ The force of both Porter and *The Nation*’s propositions were sufficiently long-lasting for John Mitchel to refer back to Porter’s plan in his 1861 polemic, *The Last Conquest of Ireland (Perhaps)*.³⁵

The Irish Militia and the Crimean War

The eventual re-embodiment of the Irish Militia resulted from the problems in developing a reliable army reserve during the Crimean War, but tangentially reveals much about the Irish military environment. The English Militia was reformed as early as 1852, but Ireland (and Scotland) lagged two years behind, and were officially re-formed through the Militia (Ireland) Act, 1854. This act authorized the enrolment of 30,000 men under the direct control of the Lord Lieutenant, consisting of 35 regiments of Infantry and 12 of Artillery.³⁶ As Ian Beckett has argued, the reviving of the Irish and Scottish Militias should be seen “purely as a mechanism for channelling manpower into the army.”³⁷ In this situation, the Irish Militia provided a disproportionate number of recruits for the

³⁰ Quoted in *The Spectator*, 14 Dec., 1844

³¹ “The Irish Militia”, *The Nation*, 14 Dec., 1844.

³² Edmund Burke Roche, Later 1st Baron Fermoy, MP for Cork 1837-55, Lord Lieutenant for Cork, and eventually Lieutenant Colonel of the South Cork Light Infantry Militia Regiment.

³³ *Cork Examiner*, 18 Dec., 1844.

³⁴ *The Nation*, 14 Dec., 1844. The article considers militias in Prussia, Sweden, Hungary, Austria, and Switzerland.

³⁵ John Mitchel, *The Last Conquest of Ireland (Perhaps)* (Glasgow: R & T Washbourne Ltd., 1861), 74–75.

³⁶ *Militia (Ireland). A bill (as amended in committee) to amend the laws relating to the militia, and for raising a volunteer militia force, in Ireland, 1854. Hereafter Militia (Ireland) Act, 1854.* The number of Regiments varied over the century, with some regiments existing on paper only at different times.

³⁷ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 153.

regular army, with approximately 25 per cent of militia volunteers.³⁸ It had three significant periods of active deployment (1854-6 for the Crimean War, 1857-60 for the Indian Mutiny/First Indian War of Independence, and 1899-1902 for the Boer War), but otherwise annual training was the only time during the year when the regiments assembled.³⁹

During the first two periods of embodiment the Irish Militia was used as a strategic accordion. Rather than being posted directly to the theatre of war, most regiments were sent to England to cover garrison duty, allowing regular troops to be freed up for front-line duty. The North Cork Regiment of Militia, for example, served both functions during the Indian Mutiny, providing 317 volunteers directly to the Royal Artillery, with the remainder of the Regiment serving first in Portsmouth and later Ayr, Scotland, to free up their regular garrison troops for service in India.⁴⁰ Similarly, the Queen's County Militia "sent up [to the regulars] half as many men as have enrolled" with other recruits to the regulars completely bypassing the militia altogether.⁴¹ These considerations led to a situation where the Irish Militia came to be seen as "a crucial cog within this machine of strategic planning."⁴²

Bowman and Butler have argued that "substantial landowners saw service in the militia as an expected duty," but with that duty came benefits, as militia service could be used for social gain.⁴³ For County Lords Lieutenant, appointing the militia officers was one of the few means of patronage available to them, and could be viewed as adding political capital to this appointment. This patronage was further incentivized during the Crimean war when one ensign's commission was

³⁸ Bowman and Butler, "Ireland," 49; For a more detailed discussion of Crimean Recruitment in Ireland see; David Murphy, *Ireland and the Crimean War* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), 197–206.

³⁹ Militia (Ireland) Act, 1854, Article XVIII. Some regiments were paper regiments only (in 1865, the Londonderry and Galway Artillery), see Semple, 30.

⁴⁰ Robert Day, "A Short Sketch of the North Cork Regiment of Militia, 9th Bn. K.R.R. Raised 1793. Disbanded March 31st, 1908," *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society* XIV, no. 78 (April 1908): 56.

⁴¹ 'Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Present System of Recruiting in the Army; Together with the Minutes of Evidence', 1861, 328. For further details of militia recruitment into the regular army in the 1850s see Huddie, *Ireland and the Crimean War*, 170-2.

⁴² William Butler, 'The Irish Amateur Military Tradition in the British Army, c.1854-1945' (PhD Thesis, University of Kent, 2013), 51.

⁴³ Bowman and Butler, 'Ireland', 46.

given to the militia colonels for every “75 men who were given to the line.”⁴⁴ For officers, service in the Irish Militia was often seen as a “back door” to gaining a commission, particularly for those who had failed the rigorous entrance examinations to Woolwich or Sandhurst.⁴⁵ Even at the height of army reform that followed the Fenian scare, Secretary of State for War Cardwell was quick to guarantee that he hadn’t the “slightest intention” of removing of this prerogative, despite the abolition of the “Purchase System” from the regular army from 1872.⁴⁶

Between 1860 and 1865 the Irish Militia grew from a total establishment of 20,946 to 33,173 (all ranks). While this paper number is deceptive, the number of men of all ranks attending annual training more than doubled between 1859 and 1865, growing from 11,511 to 24,278 (See Appendix D below). Even if under-strength at training, this was still a sizable force, claiming parity with the regular army in size, if not capability and experience. It was disproportionately composed of artillery regiments, with twelve out of the thirty-three militia artillery regiments in the UK being Irish regiments.⁴⁷ Butler attributes this imbalance to three revealing factors. Firstly, in a broader strategic sense, countries with longer coasts self-evidently need more coastal artillery. Secondly, the physical strength needed to operate artillery was more suited to men from Irish farming districts already hardened to the physicality of agricultural labour, rather than to their largely urban, industrial counterparts in England.⁴⁸ And thirdly, it was considered that it was safer to train Irishmen with artillery rather than in musketry, as artillery was less likely to be used during insurrections - particularly relevant to the Fenian period when the scarcity of rifles was an overriding concern for the Fenian leadership.⁴⁹ At times of difficulty, the Artillery Militia could be called out, but the

⁴⁴ Paul Huddle, ‘Ireland and the Crimean War, 1854-6: A Study of Domestic Response’ (PhD Thesis, Queen’s University, 2013), 166.

⁴⁵ Butler, ‘Irish Amateur Military Tradition’, 95–96.

⁴⁶ HC Deb 11 March 1869. Vol. 194 cc 1124.

⁴⁷ Bowman and Butler, ‘Ireland’, 44.

⁴⁸ Butler, “Irish Amateur Military Tradition,” 43; For full details on the composition and deployment of the Militia Artillery see W. H. Clements, “Irish Militia Artillery, 1854-1909,” *Irish Sword: Journal of the Military History Society of Ireland* 26, no. 104 (Winter 2008): 171–89.

⁴⁹ Butler, ‘Irish Amateur Military Tradition’, 43. For a more detailed analysis of the composition and imperial usage of the Irish Militia see, Butler, 33-82.

military authorities might take the precaution to “not serve out small arms to the artillery”.⁵⁰

Discipline

The issue of discipline, or lack of it, was central to the decision whether to allow embodiment of the Irish Militia, particularly regarding the later issue of infiltration. Poor discipline, however, did not always necessarily equate with either disloyalty or disaffection, as was most clearly demonstrated during the 1856 Tipperary Mutiny. As the militia regiments returned to Ireland following their Crimean deployments, a series of events occurred in quick succession that escalated the North Tipperary Militia’s “simmering discontent in the ranks into open mutiny.”⁵¹ Rumours abounded that the bounties due to the soldiers as they prepared for disembodiment would not be paid, a situation compounded by a demand from the War Office that all recently issued uniforms be returned to regimental stores. The stripping of some soldiers was the flashpoint around which the “Battle of the Breeches” occurred, resulting in 90 courts-martial, with one ringleader being sentenced to death. The perception that this mutiny had resulted from genuine grievances generated considerable public support for the court-martialled soldiers resulting in the commutation of sentences.⁵²

Similarly, between the late 1850s and early 1860s, Con Costello notes that at the Curragh Camp “friction between the militia units seems to have been a common occurrence,” often based on regional, inter-regimental rivalries.⁵³ This resulted in brawling between soldiers, but disciplinary issues were usually dealt with by simply having the regiments “dispersed to distant stations” during training periods.⁵⁴ Butler attributes part of this indiscipline to the fact that the short training periods for the militia left insufficient time to create a disciplined soldier, and points to the fact that while the Irish Militia constituted 21 per cent of the

⁵⁰ Memorandum of IGMI Col. Smyth, to Larcom, 22 Apr., 1866. NLI, Mayo Papers. MS 11,188. The memorandum is quoted in its entirety in Appendix C of Semple thesis, 174-5.

⁵¹ Murphy, *Ireland and the Crimean War*, 200.

⁵² Murphy, 404.

⁵³ Costello, *A Most Delightful Station: The British Army on the Curragh of Kildare, Ireland, 1855-1922*, 139-40.

⁵⁴ Costello, 139-40.

entire UK, they represented only 17 per cent of those at annual training in the period up to 1862, which might account for the relatively higher levels of ill discipline in the Irish Militia.⁵⁵ However, in terms of attendance at annual training from 1862 onwards, the Irish Militia must be considered impressive, with fewer than 4 per cent of officers, 2 per cent of NCOs, and 6-10 per cent of privates absent from training without leave. By 1865, only 6.2 per cent of Irish Privates were absent, virtually the same as England (5.1 per cent) and Scotland (4.9 per cent) (See Appendix D).

The Militia and Fenianism

Both the Fenians and the civil-military administration of Ireland acknowledged the contested nature of the militia, with infiltration posing one of the greatest threats to stability in Ireland. As early as 1855 word reached the Irish Executive from both official and unofficial sources questioning the fidelity of the militia.⁵⁶ HM Consul Barclay in New York wrote to the Duke of Clarendon in the Foreign Office warning repeatedly about the proto-Fenian organization known as the “Cincinnati Filibusters”, claiming that, “not only the Catholics in the Irish Militia Regiments, but the Catholic policemen in Ireland, have been corrupted and have signified their intention to united in rebellion when the signal shall be given.” Arms and men were to be landed in the vicinity of Galway, though the problems associated with the US Neutrality Act greatly diminished the possibility of such an invasion ever occurring.⁵⁷

Similarly, in November 1864 an anonymous threatening letter was sent to Prime Minister Palmerston claiming that an American descent on the Irish coasts was imminent and that “the Police and Militia are with us to a man.”⁵⁸ Although clearly a gross exaggeration, it established the urgency for action by the Irish

⁵⁵ Butler, ‘Irish Amateur Military Tradition’, 180–81.

⁵⁶ For unofficial intelligence see letters from New York (20 Aug.) and Tipperary (6 Aug), CSORP 1856, Box 745, 7230.

⁵⁷ Consul Barclay to Lord Clarendon (Foreign Office), Despatch No. 43. 24 Jul. 1855. CSORP 1856, Box 745, 7230. See also, David Sim, ‘Filibusters, Fenians, and Contested Neutrality - The Irish Question and U.S. Diplomacy, 1848-1871’, *American Nineteenth Century History* vol 12, no. 3 (September 2011): 267–72.

⁵⁸ Anonymous to PM Palmerston, 23 Nov. 1864. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C, 4016, 47-50.

Executive. Only slightly more believable was the opinion of Captain (later Colonel) Thomas Kelly, Fenian leader in 1867. Writing to John O'Mahony in the summer of 1865 Kelly (alias Thomas O'Reilly) boasted that, "The contingencies in our favour are immense: the location of immense stores of arms and ammunition is known, and plans to seize them have been drawn up [...] about half the militia are in the organization."⁵⁹ This opinion was widely held, with the *Irish Times* writing in September 1865 that,

It is generally believed, and on good grounds, that a great portion of the Southern and Western Counties Militia are concerned in the Fenian Conspiracy. No doubt, in due time, the Government will be enabled to punish and expose the leaders and abettors of the system, and purge the militia traitors and treasonable practices.⁶⁰

At virtually the same time the Home Secretary, Sir George Grey, discussed the possible preventative measure of "calling up the Irish Militia Regiments and sending them out of Ireland", but noted that such a measure could "only be justified by a conviction on the part of the Government that a widespread insurrection was imminent", a possibility that was politically unpalatable at that stage.⁶¹

The Irish Executive recognized that Fenianism in the Militia was far from uniform across the regiments. The Inspector General of the Militia in Ireland [IGMI] Col. Smyth used his comprehensive inspection of the training during the summer of 1865 as a template to draw up a private report for Wodehouse outlining the levels of loyalty and subversion across the country. Here, and in subsequent correspondence, Smyth identified the Kerry, Carlow, and South Cork Militias as being the most disaffected, but that in general terms "all the Regiments [are] very obedient, well conducted and attentive."⁶² Smyth acknowledged that there were isolated expressions of support for Fenianism, particularly when the soldiers were drunk in the local towns, but despite the presence of "idle persons

⁵⁹ Thomas O'Reilly (Capt. Kelly) to John O'Mahony, 21 June 1865. The American Catholic History Research Centre and University Archives. Box 1, Folder 7, Item 14. <http://dspace.wrlc.org/doc/bitstream/2041/5136/1/b1f7-a14-001text.htm>. Accessed 31 June 2014.

⁶⁰ *Irish Times*. 22 Sept. 1865. "The Fenian Conspiracy – Further Arrests".

⁶¹ George Grey (HO) to Wodehouse, 16 Sept. 1865. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C, 4032. 18-25.

⁶² Col. Smyth to Wodehouse. 11 June, 1865. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4026, 154-7; Col. Smyth to Wodehouse, 25 June, 1865. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4027, 111-2.

[...] who would be easily misled," he had no doubt that "anything approaching disaffection exists amongst them."⁶³ He also made the critical distinction between the degree to which Fenianism existed when the soldiers were billeted in local towns and when the regiments were fully embodied for imperial service. In the event of the regiments being permanently called out for service in the Empire, "they would never think of secret societies, which they only got tainted by when dispersed."⁶⁴

Like Smyth, Rose received numerous informal warnings, particularly with regard to the Kilkenny, Waterford, and Tipperary Militias, and concerning the NCOs of the West Cork Militia Artillery.⁶⁵ With the perception of growing Fenianism within the Irish Militia and the option of deployment abroad off the table, it became evident to the Irish Executive that postponement of annual militia training was the only viable option. Although the tendency to view the infiltration of the Militia in purely negative terms was prevalent, some loyal militia officers presented themselves as potential sources of intelligence on Fenianism. A former NCO of the Cork Militia Artillery, Sergeant John Warner, returned to the fold having served as a "B" (Captain) in the Fenian Brotherhood. He provided valuable information about Fenian plans to attack isolated police barracks that helped to inform the Executive's response to the growing threat in the autumn of 1865.⁶⁶ Similarly, Captain Thomas Pudney, Adjutant of the West Cork Artillery, provided valuable information of Fenian activity at Macroom.⁶⁷

Postponement of Training

Before a general postponement was fully contemplated, sensible precautions were taken. All Militia regiments were fully disarmed and their weapons stored centrally in four places, the Pigeon House Fort, Dublin; Enniskillen; Athlone; and Haulbowline Fort in Cork Harbour.⁶⁸ Only the permanent staffs of the Militia were

⁶³ Ibid. (11 June).

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ See particularly Rose to Wodehouse, 9 Jan. 1866. BL, Rose Papers, ADD MS 42,821, 236-8.

⁶⁶ Ó Broin, *Fenian Fever*, 12. See also; *Irish Times* 20 Sept. 1865; *Freeman's Journal* 14 Oct. 1865.

⁶⁷ Captain Thomas Pudney, Adjutant, West Cork Artillery to Colonel Edward S Smyth IGMI, 10 Mar., 1867. NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 1732, 4002.

⁶⁸ Semple, 36.

allowed to retain their weapons. Between January and February of 1866 Wodehouse received numerous formal requests both in favour of and discouraging the cancellation of militia training. IGMI Col. Smyth and Lord Sligo wrote of the “dangers in calling out the militia” and that the “training should be disposed of this year,” aware of a growth in Fenian activity and the numerous rumours of a possible insurrection around Christmas 1865.⁶⁹

Not all opinions received were in favour of cancellation, however. Perhaps highlighting his own lack of awareness of the situation on the ground in Ireland, Lord Donegall was aghast at such a suggestion. Writing to Wodehouse from Berkshire at the end of January he expressed his surprise saying,

I see it mentioned in the papers that the ‘Irish Militia’ are not to be called out for training this year. I hope most sincerely this is not true unless the same prohibition is extended to the English regiments. I cannot but believe it would be most disastrous to cast a doubt upon their loyalty.⁷⁰

He went on to profess how valuable the Irish Regiments, “at any rate some of them”, had been in the suppression of the rebellion of 1798.⁷¹ Here the comparison with the English Militia is most telling. Their training went ahead as usual, despite the well-documented spread of Fenianism in Irish emigrant communities all over mainland Britain, for whom enrolment in their local militia remained not only possible but probable. The CSORP contains a limited number of reports of Fenian infiltration into British militia regiments, such as Earl de Grey’s concern that “not less than a thousand Irishmen belonging to the Volunteers of London [intended coming over to Dublin], having first sent their arms and uniforms for the purpose of taking part in a Fenian movement expected to take place in this country”.⁷² Naas requested that the War Office ascertain the “truth of this statement as it applies to all the London Volunteer Corps”. The informant had already departed for America, making it “therefore impossible to make any further inquiry of him.”⁷³ Simon Jones’s examination of potential Fenian infiltration of the 64th Liverpool ‘Irish’ Rifle

⁶⁹ Col Smith to Wodehouse. 9 Feb. 1866. Bodl., Kim. Ms Eng. C. 4041, 92-3 & 94-5.

⁷⁰ Lord Donegall to Wodehouse. 29 Jan. 1866. Bodl., Kim. Ms Eng. C. 4040, 181-2.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Daniel McArdle to Inspector General of Constabulary, 12 Jan., 1866. Earl de Grey and Ripon to Larcom, 18 Jan., 1866. NAI, CSORP 1866. Box 1695, 800 & 1064.

⁷³ Ibid., Annotation of Naas, 22 Jan., 1866.

Volunteers, however, led him to conclude that, “claims of widespread sympathy... are not sustained by the surviving evidence.”⁷⁴

An official memorandum from Col. Smyth may, however, illustrate the degree to which military decisions demanded the political oversight of the Irish Executive as a matter of necessity. Writing to Larcom, Smyth recognized that “practically, the Government are in a much better opinion to know the real state of political feeling from amongst the class from whence the militia men are taken, than Commanding Officers could be in regiments in a disembodied state, whose members are scattered about the country.”⁷⁵ Furthermore, a paradoxical situation presented itself to Smyth who would be unable to make an informed judgment as to the loyalty or disaffection of the militia unless they were gathered together, which would quite defeat the purpose of the requested advice. While no “official” reports had been received from around the country, Smyth had received informal advice from south Ulster urging him not to arm the regiments. Rather than a definitive cancellation, Smyth suggested an interim solution, a postponement until the autumn to avoid interfering with the harvest, but before the harshest of the winter months.⁷⁶ This was precisely the period at which the bounties would eventually be paid to the men, with the Adjutant of the Royal Meath Militia forced to visit “the various towns in the county for that purpose,” and to ensure that additional acrimony was not generated.⁷⁷

If, as seems likely, Smyth’s report was central to the official application to postpone the training, then it must be acknowledged that the nature of the report highlights the problems associated with it as an historical source. Rather than an official account of how the militia in some areas were infiltrated by Fenianism, it reinforces the argument that there was simply too little information available to guarantee the fidelity of the force, particularly given that the return only accounts for 23 of the 44 Irish Militia Regiments, thus downplaying the apparent loyalty of

⁷⁴ Simon Jones, ‘Fenianism in the Liverpool Irish Rifle Volunteers’ (Masters Thesis, University of Liverpool, 1997), 51.

⁷⁵ Mayo Papers, NLI, MS 11,188/10. Quoted Semple, 174.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ J.B. Kersteman, *Record of the Formation, Service, Marches, &c of the 5th Battalion, The Prince of Wales’ Leinster Regiment. Late Royal Meath Militia* (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis, and Co., 1882).

virtually half of the force (See appendix F). The nature of the rumours that informed the unusually high return for Carlow hints at the far more problematic systematic inability to gather adequate intelligence, in which instance the Executive was compelled to err on the side of caution. That a small number of the “permanent staff” were also implicated in disloyalty illustrates the difficulty in unilaterally relying on the command structure of the Militia as a branch of state infrastructural power. The tactful manner in which the Irish Government dealt with this issue illustrates a well-grounded understanding of the unfolding political and military challenges it faced.

By March 1866 Wodehouse had secured the approval of the new Secretary of State for War, Lord Hartington, to postpone the militia training. Political considerations remained central. Hartington advised that while the members of the Commons who were connected with the Irish Militia agreed with his assessment, “they don’t want anything said about it.”⁷⁸ General Dunne, MP for Queen’s County and commander of its Militia, proved this concern to be well founded when he noted the broader strategic implications of cancelling Militia training. “What would be believed in America”, he asked, “when it was known that the Government were so afraid of the movement in Ireland that they dared not call out the Militia for the annual training? Would it not encourage the Fenian conspirators in that country—perhaps tempt them to some violent undertaking?”⁷⁹ Rather than a precautionary measure, Dunne implied that the cancellation might serve as a catalyst for insurrection, much as the suspension of *Habeas Corpus* had almost done only ten weeks earlier. The fear of complaints from all angles prompted Wodehouse to side with Smyth and to issue the formal notice of postponement.⁸⁰ Without such a notice being given it would have been impossible to issue the annual militia bounty to the rank and file. Failure to compensate the men for a cancelled training, in a manner consistent with a cancellation in

⁷⁸ Lord Hartington (WO) to Wodehouse, 22 Mar. 1866. Bodl., Kim, MS Eng C 4044, 102-104.

⁷⁹ HC Deb 30 April 1866. Vol. 183, cc 178.

⁸⁰ Wodehouse to Hartington, 25 Mar. 1866. Bodl., Kim, MS Eng C 4044, 114.

Longford due to medical incapacity in 1865, would certainly have contributed to discontent and increased support for Fenianism in the militia as a whole.⁸¹

The cancellation was generally well received in the loyalist press, with the *Irish Times* echoing the Chief Secretary Chichester Fortescue's argument that

It was thought to be an unwise thing, and most unfair to the militia, to call them together at a time when the barracks which usually received them were filled with regular troops, and to expose them to the temptations of Fenian agents, who, the Government knew, had directed their attention, especially though it believed with limited success, to the corruption of the Irish Militia.⁸²

This justification clearly frames the cancellation as a preventative, rather than a reactive measure. As such, it is a distortion of the situation, but nevertheless one that highlights the political prerogatives at play. It set the tone for the cautious pattern that would come to characterize the subsequent, year-on-year cancellations that would follow. As Semple has described it, the government's response was filled with "evasiveness and double-talk", going on to highlight the contradictory response of the Chief Secretary who implied "on the one hand the government was not calling out the militia because they were already infected by Fenianism, and that, on the other hand, it would not call them out for fear they might become infected by it."⁸³

Impact of the Irish Militia on British counterinsurgency

Although the Militia was not embodied during the period, its infrastructure still made a valuable contribution to the overall counterinsurgency effort. The practical problems involved in the redistribution of the regular army were alleviated by the system of local barracks that had generally remained under militia control. Writing to clarify the details of the distribution of the regular troops (detailed in the Army Chapter), Rose asked Wodehouse whether he would "allow me to cause the barracks in places occupied by the Militia to be vacated for the troops?"⁸⁴ This "direction to vacate" needed to be issued by the Lord Lieutenant who was

⁸¹ Col. Smyth to Wodehouse, 30 May, 1865. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4026, 47-51. *Irish Times* 1 Jul., 1865.

⁸² *Irish Times*. 1 May 1866.

⁸³ Semple, 'Fenian Infiltration', 35.

⁸⁴ Rose to Wodehouse, 29 Jan. 1866. Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,821, 287.

responsible for the disembodied militia. With only occasional exceptions, such as a desire to avoid disturbing certain militia staffs, Wodehouse promised to give “every facility as to removing the militia from the barracks they occupy.”⁸⁵

When the long-threatened rising did take place, militia officers contributed in an *ad hoc* manner. William Monsell, MP and Colonel of the Limerick Militia, was quick to render service. At the height of the crisis he “almost lived at the club, and was the centre of all action, and by his wise, conciliatory, and at the same time energetic counsels, he restored and maintained confidence.”⁸⁶ Quantifying the impact of morale-boosting actions is extremely difficult, but it might be considered that this type of advice or input from other militia officers would have been useful to both the Irish Executive and the military administration.

The kinds of benefits and insights to be offered by Militia officers are most starkly seen in the rise through the ranks of IGMI Col. Selby Smyth. At the height of Rising in March 1867 Rose was at a considerable disadvantage due to the chronic illness of the long-serving Adjutant General of the Army in Ireland, Col. McKenzie, who had been forced to take a three-month leave of absence to recuperate from chronic “fever and ague.”⁸⁷ Ordinarily, this would have presented little difficulty, as his deputy would simply have acted up in his place. Unfortunately, Rose found McKenzie’s Deputy Adjutant, Captain Hay, incapable of performing the necessary tasks, commenting to General Forster that, “his [Capt. Hay’s] short comings are not want of willingness, but absence of energy and intelligence.”⁸⁸ The rigours of the task at hand prompted Rose to seek a dispensation from the Duke of Cambridge to replace McKenzie with Col. Smyth on the grounds that,

He [Smyth] is a first rate officer and thoroughly acquainted with Ireland; has been mentioned in despatches for good conduct in the field, and is on the spot. The Militia Staff are placed under me and therefore so far from being a disadvantage, his being with me would be an advantage.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ Rose to Wodehouse, 15 Jan., 1866. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C. 4040, 171-174.

⁸⁶ Letter from Stephen de Vere to Lord Dunraven, 11 May 1867. Quoted in Matthew Potter, *William Monsell of Tervoe, 1812-1894: Catholic Unionist, Anglo-Irishman* (Portland, OR: Irish Academic Press, 2009), 129.

⁸⁷ Strathnairn to General Forster. 17 Mar., 1867. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,823, 269.

⁸⁸ Strathnairn to Duke of Cambridge. 11 Mar., 1867. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,823, 252-4. Original Emphasis.

⁸⁹ Lord Strathnairn to General Forster. 17 Mar. 1867. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,823, 269. See also Strathnairn to Military Secretary (Horse Guards), 17 Mar., 1867. TNA, WO 35/32, 26-7.

Smyth's local knowledge made him a particular asset. He was officially appointed as DAG on 12 March, 1867 and also appointed as a "Special Magistrate for the County and City of Dublin, to use troops independently in case of rebellion."⁹⁰ So successful did this promotion prove for Smyth that it opened up broader imperial postings to him. He later served as Commander of the Forces and Governor of Mauritius and ultimately rose to the rank of Lieutenant-General, serving as the First "Chief of Land Staff" (Militia) in Canada.⁹¹

Long-term impact

The long-term impact of the cancellation of training had administrative, economic, and counterinsurgency consequences. An unintended consequence was to exacerbate the army's recruiting crisis, a grave concern to the Duke of Cambridge. Semple's assertion that "the government chose to face a recruiting crisis rather than a rebellion of the Irish Militia" is an important factor in understanding this particular institution.⁹² Rose viewed the Militia as both a source of recruits in the short term, and also part of the long-term solution to the recruiting problem that required closer integration between the army and the country. General Rose argued to the *Commission on Recruiting* that a closer connection was needed "between the Regiments of the Line, their counties, and Militia Regiments, and the Ballot for the Militia, which should be made more military and be better instructed."⁹³ This sentiment is key to understanding Rose's desire to extend the infrastructural power of the army through a reorganization of the Militia. This is supported by the opinion of General Dunne who accounted for the recruiting success of his Queen's County Militia by arguing that, as the militia's headquarters was in the county town, "the men are more attracted to the regiment: their connexions, their friends, and relations have passed through the regiment, and

⁹⁰ Appointment of new Deputy Adjutant General, General Order No. 453, enclosed in NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 1732, 4123. See also, Andrew Godefroy, 'Army Biography: The First "Chief of Land Staff" — Lieutenant-General Sir Edward Selby, KCMG', *Canadian Army Journal* Vol. 12.1 (Spring 2009): 116.

⁹¹ Godefroy, 116.

⁹² Semple, 'Fenian Infiltration', 37.

⁹³ Rose to Delane, 25 Aug. 1866. BL, Rose Papers, ADD MS 42,822, 197-203.

they generally come to it.”⁹⁴ One proposal to encourage recruitment was to increase the daily pay for the Permanent Staff, NCOs, and Privates (two pence per day) involved in annual training, with the offer of an additional bounty to those who were prepared to join an official ‘Army of Reserve’.⁹⁵ Ultimately, one penny per day was granted, which indicates the severity of the problem at a time of significant cutbacks elsewhere in the military.⁹⁶

One solution to the danger of Fenian infiltration of the Militia seemed straight-forward. Writing to the Lord Lieutenant, Col. Smyth argued that the oath within the “Attestation for Militia Volunteer” form should be altered to take account of Fenian activity, suggesting the inclusion of the following question: “Do you belong to any Secret Society or organization, or have you ever belonged to such? If so, state the nature.”⁹⁷ While Smyth considered that the general oath of allegiance should cover all such activity he added that he knew that “many ignorant country lads simply take that oath as a matter of form without feeling its importance, but they would not so readily deny a plain question.” Smyth received the approval of the Lord Lieutenant to submit the matter to the War Office. However, Col. J.R. Pison, the Inspector General of Militia (UK), denied the request without providing any justification beyond the mere statement that “it would not be desirable” to include the changes.”⁹⁸

The decision to continue the postponement of training was taken on a year-by-year basis. Over a year after the failed rising, the Chief Secretary faced a seemingly less complicated decision. Writing to Abercorn offering his opinion on the militia training, Naas (now Lord Mayo) noted that

I own that I think that as the Country is now so quiet and many signs exist of the dying out of Fenianism, it would be a great evidence of confidence if we were to get back as soon as possible to the usual

⁹⁴ ‘Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Present System of Recruiting in the Army; Together with the Minutes of Evidence’, 328.

⁹⁵ ‘Army Estimates, 1867-68. Supplementary Estimate to Cover the Charges for Granting an Increase of Pay to the Non-Commissioned Officers and Men of the Army and Militia, and for the More Efficient Recruiting of the Army.’, Parliamentary Papers, 1867.

⁹⁶ Fortescue, *A History of the British Army*, XIII:530-34; Semple, ‘Fenian Infiltration’, 37.

⁹⁷ Col. Smyth to Abercorn, 11 Jan. 1867. NAI, CSORP 1867, Box 1732, 3717. War Office Form 798 – See enclosure with correspondence, Inspector General of Militia in England and Scotland, Col. Ripon to Colonel Smyth & Larcom, 8 Jan. 1867.

⁹⁸ Col. Smyth. 7 Mar. 1867. NAI, CSORP, Box 1732, 3717.

state of things. [Lord] Longford is very much in favour of it being done.⁹⁹

Despite this positive tone, caution dictated that training remained suspended until 1871. This was due, presumably, to the subsequent impact of the Manchester Martyrs and Clerkenwell explosions in Britain, but no direct evidence has been discovered which may have been used to justify the continued cancellation of militia training.

Both at a local and national level it became apparent that the continued training cancellations and the *Habeas Corpus* suspension were inexorably linked. Reinstating *Habeas Corpus* would be seen as an indication of a return of normality to Ireland, a situation conducive to militia embodiment. The quartermaster of the Monaghan Militia understood that the cancellation of training would continue until “all matters of a political nature had quite settled down, and the *Habeas Corpus* Act allowed to drop.”¹⁰⁰ Similarly, when asked in the Commons in February 1869 whether militia training would resume, Liberal Chief Secretary Chichester Fortescue reminded colonels French and Forde (MPs representing Roscommon and Down respectively and Militia commanders for their areas) that, “they had not yet begun to undertake the task of governing Ireland under the provisions of the ordinary law, and if any error were committed it would be better that that error should be on the side of caution.”¹⁰¹

The decision whether or not to continue the cancellation of militia training was also informed by the financial impact it would have upon different parts of Irish society. Despite the fact that those volunteers for the Irish Militia were drawn from a group of people enjoying higher overall employment than their English counterparts, the financial impact of the suspensions of the militia was significant at personal, local, and national levels.¹⁰² At a personal level, the bounty paid to men at the end of training periods was between £2-£3, but this was sweetened by the issuing of clothing and billeting. However, the sudden influx of income might not

⁹⁹ Mayo to Abercorn. 12 May, 1868. PRONI, Abercorn Papers T2541/VR/85/85.

¹⁰⁰ William Watson ed., *Records of the Monaghan Militia 1793-1870*, (Transcribed by Brendan and Donal Hall, 1999) 1871, 35.

¹⁰¹ HC Deb, 19 Feb., 1869. Vol. 194 c125.

¹⁰² Bowman and Butler, ‘Ireland’, 48.

always be beneficial to good conduct, with Smyth noting wryly to Wodehouse that “any body of men suddenly released from discipline with two pounds ten shillings in their pockets are likely to create a temporary uproar”, reflecting the earlier discussion on indiscipline within the Irish Militia.¹⁰³

Concerned at the economic impact at the time of the original cancellation, General Dunne pointed out that many of the private individuals had been counting on the regular embodiment of the Militia. Those involved in billeting the troops “had incurred large expenditure in preparing their houses for the reception of the force in different parts of the country. It was a service capable of being rendered very popular by the outlay which it occasioned.”¹⁰⁴ The gentry houses, often also home to the local militia colonel, were the locale for considerable dinners and balls for the regimental officers. In the longer embodiment during the Crimean War, for example, the Monaghan Militia (a self-proclaimed “crack militia corps”) spent from January to September 1855 in its home county, when “hardly a week passed without a large party of the officers dining with Lord and Lady Rossmore.”¹⁰⁵ Perhaps with some hyperbole, it has been suggested that in times of war many tradesmen and local businesses became overly dependent on wartime contracts with an “entire generation” now accustomed “to earn their bread on the assumption that hostilities would exist for ever [...] Vast fortunes were rapidly made, and the national liabilities were left to be provided for in the future.”¹⁰⁶

The Army Estimates for 1865 indicate that the overall cost of training the “Disembodied Militia” for the United Kingdom amounted to £783,783.¹⁰⁷ By 1869 the new Secretary of State for War, Cardwell, explained that a saving of £34,000 had accrued annually, and that in the principal costs, primarily clothing, an additional £48,000 had been saved.¹⁰⁸ A tentative figure of £410,000 over the five-

¹⁰³ Col. Smyth to Wodehouse. 11 June, 1865. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4026, 154-7.

¹⁰⁴ HC Deb 30 April 1866. Vol. 183 cc 177-80

¹⁰⁵ Watson, *Records of the Monaghan Militia 1793-1870*, 20.

¹⁰⁶ Richey, *A Short History of the Royal Longford Militia, 1793-1893*, 70.

¹⁰⁷ ‘Army Estimates, 1864-65. Statement Showing the Variation of the Numbers of Her Majesty’s British Forces; and Explanations of the Differences between the Amounts Proposed in the Army Estimates for 1864-65, and the Amounts Voted for 1863-64’, Parliamentary Papers, 1864, 6. The records do not give a regional breakdown of the costs.

¹⁰⁸ HC Deb 11 March 1869. Vol. 194 cc 1124.

year period (£82,000 x 1866-70) could therefore be considered to have been lost to Irish businesses on account of the training cancellations. The Irish Militia, therefore, played an important economic role that supplemented its importance as a cog of both the systems of Imperial defence, and national security.

The absence of the Irish Militia from training at the peak of the Fenian conspiracy, therefore, might be viewed, as 'The O'Donoghue' did, a sign of the disparity in governance between Great Britain and Ireland. Its numerous social, economic, political, and military roles, however, ensured that the failure to embody the troops for annual training does not necessarily indicate that the Irish Militia failed to contribute to the overall counterinsurgency actions in those years. Rather, it highlights the fact that its strength lay not only in its manpower, but also in its infrastructure, an asset that remained of use, even in the absence of its potentially infiltrated troops.

Part III - The Naval Sphere

The Admiralty and Ireland

The Admiralty played a central role in the deterrence and suppression of the attempted Fenian rising in the 1860s. Thus, with the prospect of an impending rising, the immediate reaction of the Irish Executive was to request the Admiralty's assistance. The First Lord of the Admiralty, the Duke of Somerset, explained that this assistance would be decisive by noting, "If any attempt to disturb the peace should occur, vigorous measures at first will be the most merciful."¹ A detailed investigation of Ireland's relationship with the Admiralty in the 1860s offers valuable insights into the Irish Executive's growing dependence on naval power for the provision of internal security. This process has been described elsewhere by the author as the "navalization of Ireland".² The practice began with the reaction to the Repeal Crisis and Young Ireland rising, but intensified at the onset of the transatlantic Fenian conspiracy of the 1860s. The Admiralty's large deployment of ships on the Irish coast sought to regulate the medium through which the transatlantic Fenian movement flowed, and therefore requires far greater attention than previous historians of the period have afforded it. It is the central argument of this chapter that by "encouraging the loyal and overawing the disaffected", the Admiralty's three branches of power (the Royal Navy, the Royal Marines, and the Coastguard) came to be accepted by the Irish Executive as the key elements in the provision of internal security, which facilitated the expansion of the state's infrastructural power throughout the mid-Victorian period.³

As the 'Senior Service' within the British defence infrastructure the Royal Navy (RN) played a dual role. It was required to perform all its regular duties of 'Imperial Defence' while also becoming increasingly integrated with the Irish Constabulary and army in aid of the civil power. In its role as a rapid-reaction force, the Royal Marines expedited the redistribution of the army and the manning of coastal fortifications, while simultaneously facilitating the formation of Flying Columns. The Coastguard, however, was the only force to be stationed

¹ Duke of Somerset to Wodehouse, 2 Sept., 1865. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4031, 14-15.

² Elements discussed in this chapter referring to the 1840s are more substantially treated of in the article, Devitt, 'The "Navalization" of Ireland. The Royal Navy and Irish Insurrection in the 1840s'.

³ 'Report of Commander E. Plunkett' to Captain Austen and Admiral Bowles, 25 Nov., 1843. Enclosure in H Manner Scully (HO) to Eliot (C/S), 7 Dec., 1843. NAI, CSORP 1843. Box 1261. M 17498.

permanently in Ireland, and it was the force that provided the greatest practical and strategic expansion of Admiralty power throughout the Irish coastal counties. This section will begin by considering the historiographic difficulties presented in trying to interrogate the Admiralty's influence on Ireland's defence, before progressing to a systematic examination of the contribution of the three branches to the Irish Executive's counterinsurgency activities in Ireland. That contribution extended across actions, and planned actions, offshore and inland resulting in a continual growth of all aspects of blue-, green-, and brown-water naval activity in Ireland.⁴

The relationship between the Irish Executive and the Admiralty was often ambiguous. The latter was an instrument of state power available to the Irish Executive but never under its direct command. For their part, the Admiralty was very clear that there were no circumstances under which help from the Admiral in Cove "could be instructed or requested directly by the Government authorities in Dublin [Castle] or by the military authorities in Ireland."⁵ Instead, the Executive was forced to apply for 'requisitions' through the Admiralty. These requests were invariably granted, even occasionally surpassed. However, in practical terms, ships or squadrons were often ordered to operate at the "disposition" or "disposal" of the Lord Lieutenant, senior members of the gentry, or local army commanders, particularly at times of anticipated outbreaks. This process was further complicated by the nature of the internal workings of the Admiralty. The First Lord of the Admiralty was a political position, whereas the Naval Lords were permanent naval experts focusing predominantly on matters of administration rather than policy.⁶ What emerged by mid-century, however, was the primacy of "cabinet authority – now seen as the touchstone of new power," though the Cabinet's "involvement in naval matters was usually neither deep nor continual."⁷

⁴ 'Blue water' refers to oceanic activity, 'Green Water' to coastal operations, and 'Brown water' refers to riverine operations. For more see; Lindberg and Todd, *Brown-, Green-, and Blue-Water Fleets: The Influence of Geography on Naval Warfare, 1861 to the Present*.

⁵ Daire Brunnicardi, *Haulbowline: The Naval Base and Ships of Cork Harbour* (Dublin: History Press Ireland, 2012), 64.

⁶ C. I. Hamilton, *The Making of the Modern Admiralty: British Naval Policy-Making, 1805-1927* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 119.

⁷ Hamilton, 129–30.

In this context, establishing the precise motivations behind Admiralty actions in Ireland is often problematic. In the absence of specific doctrine, explanations of strategic decision-making are more easily, if sporadically, found in personal correspondence between Irish Lords Lieutenant and the First Lords of the Admiralty than elsewhere in Admiralty or other state papers. Where specific strategic explanations are absent from personal correspondence, this chapter avails of Andrew Lambert's advice that "the ships, their deployment, and operation can be read as easily as a file of papers, but they provide evidence of far greater weight."⁸ Attributing outcomes to specific naval deterrence actions is also methodologically problematic. This chapter assesses the effectiveness of naval deterrence measures by balancing the opinions of the Admiralty officials, the RN officers, the Irish administrators, and the local gentry, as well as within unionist and nationalist media reportage. This difficulty is offset, however, by the near-universal acceptance by those groups of the RN's potency as a coercive and deterrent force in Ireland throughout the Victorian period.

⁸ Greg Kennedy, ed., 'The Royal Navy and the Defence of Empire', in *Imperial Defence, The Old World Order 1856-1956* (London: Routledge, 2008), 118.

Chapter 5 “Bluster on the One Side... Sound Preparation on the Other”: The Royal Navy and Irish Insurrection

You must not expect from the navy the internal defence of the country. At the present time the Channel Squadron wanted a cruise, so we thought it as well to send them to Bantry bay. This will give confidence to those who may be alarmed and it may prevent some foolish attempt being made by the idiots, the Fenians.

Of course, if a serious attempt were made of landing a force by fast steamers, the squadron could not certainly prevent such a scheme. The Marines and sailors cannot be employed in searching for arms, nor in a demonstration of force at a distance from the Coast.¹

Despite the continued protestations of the First Lord of the Admiralty to the contrary, the RN became progressively more integrated with all aspects of Irish defence and in “aid to the civil power.” These, argues Daire Brunnicardi, had become “crucial in supporting government authority” during the Irish uprisings of the nineteenth century.² These functions included “presence, availability and mobility”, although Brunnicardi does not discuss the ways in which such functions were implemented, a task to be undertaken here.³ In a European context, Carlos Alfaro Zaforteza asserts that one of the primary roles of nineteenth-century Mediterranean navies was the suppression of internal revolts. In Spain, threats from revolutionary radicalism and Carlist absolutism saw its navy become “an indisputable instrument of national security”, a position analogous to that of the RN in nineteenth-century Ireland.⁴ Zaforteza identifies four specific ways in which navies contributed to the suppression of internal insurrection such as the provision of logistical support (troop transport, strategic mobility, supply, and communications), blockades to isolate the revolt, deterrence against foreign intervention, and direct action (naval bombardment).⁵ This structure will be employed as a means of examining the actions in Ireland, whereby the first three elements apply directly, but with ‘direct action’ limited to occasional, if potent shows of naval power and armaments.

¹ Duke of Somerset to Wodehouse, 13 Sept., 1865. Bodl., Kim. Ms Eng C 4031, 134-5.

² Brunnicardi, *Haulbowline*, 64.

³ Brunnicardi, 64-66.

⁴ Carlos Alfaro Zaforteza, “Sea Power, State and Society in Liberal Spain, 1833-68” (Unpublished PhD, King’s College, London, 2011), 139-42.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 139.

Competing forms of terminology remain difficult throughout this chapter, but will be explored more deeply in the historiography below. This is particularly the case given that the traditional definition of ‘naval diplomacy’ is described as “the exertion of influence on international affairs through naval power when not at war.”⁶ An insistence on “international affairs” precludes many aspects of RN activity in Ireland, which had a predominantly domestic focus throughout the period in question. Similarly, work on the competing term “gunboat diplomacy” specifically precludes activity such as “routine operations as police, anti-smuggling or fishery protection duties in the territorial waters of their own state,” a definition equally unhelpful when considering the RN’s roles in Ireland.⁷ Though separated by a century and a half, RN activity in mid-Victorian Ireland is much closer to the description of maritime power in current UK doctrine, which describes it as the “ability to project power at sea and from the sea to influence the behaviour of people or the course of events.”⁸ Here, the RN’s political and humanitarian functions in Ireland are seen as complementary, rather than antithetical to more traditional aspects of naval deployments.

In the light of the tension between the integration of the RN with Irish society and the deterrence of insurgents within that society, this chapter suggests that the term “naval counterinsurgency” is most usefully applied here, a term that has had growing support in recent years.⁹ In so doing it embraces the methodology adopted by Patrick Walsh in his wide-ranging examination of the fiscal-military

⁶ Kevin Rowlands, “‘Decided Preponderance at Sea’ Naval Diplomacy in Strategic Thought”, *Naval War College Review* 65, no. 4 (Autumn 2012): 90.

⁷ James Cable, *Gunboat Diplomacy. Political Applications of Limited Naval Force* (London: Chatoo and Windus for The Institute for Strategic Studies, 1971), 9.

⁸ *Joint Doctrine Publication 0-10: British Maritime Doctrine* (Ministry of Defence, 2011). Preface, v.

⁹ Steven Paget, ‘A Sledgehammer to Crack a Nut? Naval Gunfire Support during the Malayan Emergency’, *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 28, no. 2 (March 2017): 361–84; Rowlands, “‘Decided Preponderance at Sea’ Naval Diplomacy in Strategic Thought”; Benjamin Armstrong, ‘Small Boats and Daring Men: Naval Irregular Warfare and the U.S. Navy in the Age of Sail’ (Ph.D, King’s College, London, 2016), 270–77; Benjamin Armstrong, ‘The Most Daring Act of the Age: Principles for Naval Irregular Warfare’, *Naval War College Review* Vol. 63, no. No. 4 (Autumn 2010): 106–18. The term ‘Naval Irregular Warfare’ comes closest to the established sense of ‘Naval Counterinsurgency’ under discussion here.

impact of the Royal Navy on eighteenth-century Ireland.¹⁰ It seeks to synthesise this approach with the need to consider ideas of naval counterinsurgency that were absent from the period under review by Walsh. Regardless of the specific terminology employed, it will be demonstrated throughout this chapter that a far more nuanced set of strategic and internal security considerations were in play than has been previously acknowledged. This was best epitomized by First Lord of the Admiralty Lord Auckland's insistence that in 1848 there had been "much of bluster on the one side and there will be sound preparation on the other", a view that is borne out in the previously under-explored archival record.¹¹

Historiography

A consideration of the role played by the Admiralty in the defence of Ireland and the suppression of the Fenian Conspiracy is fraught with historiographic difficulties. These challenges can be broadly categorized into five interrelated layers. First among these is the relative dearth of historical research on the mid-Victorian Navy. The second layer is the relative over-attention to technical developments, which has only relatively recently broadened out to consider the strategic questions of imperial defence. The third issue stems from the constraints involved in undertaking an historical analysis of naval deterrence, namely the methodological difficulty of accounting for the reasons why something has not happened. The fourth issue is the lack of any discrete tradition of Irish naval (as opposed to maritime) historiography. The final impediment is that of integrating the Fenian naval activities into the broader historiography of the "Atlantic World". The result of these numerous historiographic challenges is that Irish naval history falls uncomfortably between the many stools of the mid-Victorian period, incapable of being comfortably categorized as either 'Home' or 'Imperial' defence, and requiring the services of both a battlefleet and a constabulary navy. This section will briefly consider the first three of these aspects before undertaking a more detailed examination of the current state of the final two elements.

¹⁰ Patrick Walsh, 'Ireland and the Royal Navy in the Eighteenth Century', in *The Royal Navy and the British Atlantic World, C. 1750-1820*, ed. John McAleer and Christer Petley (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 51-76.

¹¹ Auckland to Clarendon, 29 Mar. 1848. Bod. MSS Clar. dep. Irish Box 1 (Bundle 10).

The most influential contribution to the historiography of Imperial defence holds within it a partial explanation into the current historiographic trends. Donald Mackenzie Schurman's frequently consulted doctoral dissertation was written in 1955 but not published until 1996. In the preface to the subsequent publication, Mackenzie Schurman reflects on the process that shaped his doctoral dissertation during the period of decolonization, and acknowledged that the Navy's central role within the imperial project meant that in the period immediately after the dissertation's completion the Navy itself "was deemed a matter not to be discussed in polite society, studies of the navy reduced themselves to battle accounts, operational histories, examination of technical minutiae and great-man biography."¹² Perhaps the most problematic aspect for Ireland was the self-professed apathy that Mackenzie Schurman had felt towards the peripheries of the British Isles. In his reflection he confessed that, at the time of its original composition, "Irish, Scottish, and Welsh nationalism appeared to me as food for artists and not much else."¹³ Based on these highly limiting criteria, it is perhaps unsurprising that no broader evaluation of the role of the RN in Ireland has been undertaken to date.

Even the concept of the "mid-Victorian navy" presents considerable difficulties. Although subsequently contested, Parkes and others originally described this period as the "Dark Ages of the Victorian navy".¹⁴ The Admiralty was a dense administrative organization whose structures had been difficult to disentangle until the contributions of C.I. Hamilton.¹⁵ John Beeler characterized the mid-Victorian navy as, "an amalgam of two forces designed for two largely incompatible, if not wholly unrelated, roles. One was suited for national defence and intervention in European affairs, the other was a peacetime police force that

¹² Greg Kennedy and Keith Neilson, *Far-Flung Lines: Studies in Imperial Defence in Honour of Donald Mackenzie Schurman* (Portland, OR: Routledge, 1996), 2.

¹³ *Imperial Defence*, preface x.

¹⁴ Oscar Parkes, *British battleships: 'Warrior' 1860, to 'Vanguard' 1950: A History of Design, Construction, and Armament* (London: Cooper, 1990), 230; N.A.M. Rodger, "The Dark Ages of the Admiralty, 1869-85", *The Mariner's Mirror* 61, no. 4 (November 1975): 331-44. It should be noted that this term initially described the post 1873 period, but applies equally to the Irish perspective of the mid-Victorian period.

¹⁵ Hamilton, *The Making of the Modern Admiralty*; C. I. Hamilton, *Anglo-French Naval Rivalry, 1840-1870* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); C. I. Hamilton, ed., *Portsmouth Dockyard Papers 1852-1869: From Wood to Iron*, Portsmouth Record Series (Winchester: Hampshire County Council, 2005).

operated almost exclusively in extra-European waters.”¹⁶ That the RN was utilized in Irish waters as both a constabulary force and a force needed for national defence problematizes the position of Ireland within this paradigm. What emerges, in part, is a picture of a “Blue Water” fleet doing a “Brown water” job.

The problem of naval deterrence is addressed by numerous authors. This concept is inexorably linked with the implementation and utility of naval blockades and provides some of the framework necessary for assessing the deployment of the naval cordon around Ireland in the late 1860s.¹⁷ As mentioned above, the more familiar concept of ‘Gunboat Diplomacy’, “the use of warships in peacetime to further a nation’s diplomatic and political aims,” is most ably treated by Preston and Major.¹⁸ Although their work discusses the use of gunboats on the North American Great Lakes to counter the frequent Fenian raids into Canada, it ignores their more substantial deployment in Ireland for a similar purpose. But as Beeler has argued, the term has “come to symbolize both the nature of British foreign policy in the Victorian era and, to a large extent, the force used to implement that policy”, thereby linking the specifically naval connotations of the term with its broader geopolitical significance.¹⁹

In practical terms and of particular relevance to Ireland, Andrew Lambert has considered the role played by important vessels to symbolic deterrence by examining the development and use of HMS *Warrior*, Britain’s first fully Ironclad vessel that spent considerable time in Irish waters in the 1860s.²⁰ Howard Fuller has argued that ships such as HMS *Warrior* not only had “potency as floating symbols of propaganda and prestige”, but also were emblematic of the state’s infrastructural power. The real source of *Warrior*’s power was “in everything that went into her construction, and everything that kept her fully operational, year-

¹⁶ John F. Beeler, *British Naval Policy in the Gladstone-Disraeli Era, 1866-1880* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 6.

¹⁷ Lance E. Davis and Stanley L. Engerman, *Naval Blockades in Peace and War: An Economic History since 1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

¹⁸ Anthony Preston and John Major, *Send a Gunboat – A study of the Gunboat and its role in British Policy, 1854-1904* (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1967), 3.

¹⁹ Beeler, *British Naval Policy in the Gladstone-Disraeli Era, 1866-1880*, 8.

²⁰ Andrew Lambert, *HMS Warrior 1860: Victoria’s Ironclad Deterrent* (London: Conway, 2011); Andrew D. Lambert, ‘Economic Power, Technological Advantage, and Imperial Strength: Britain as a Unique Global Power, 1860 – 1890’, *International Journal of Naval History* 5, no. 2 (August 2006).

round, the world-over if need be.”²¹ Cable and Berens-Matzke discuss deterrence as a primary function of a peacetime navy, with the former dedicating a chapter to a discussion of “Naval Force without Naval War”, and the latter examining the interdependence of naval and economic strength.²² In an argument that is particularly relevant to a discussion of naval deterrence as an element of state infrastructural power, John Hattendorf has noted that, “navies are instruments of governments and operate as highly technological organizations within the context of both domestic and foreign politics, finance, technology, and bureaucracy. This range is as much the realm of political scientists as it is of naval historians,” a assertion which this thesis can affirm.²³

The Irish Executive was far from sea blind, but its histories generally have been. In many ways Irish naval historiography mirrors the debate surrounding Ireland’s place within the British Empire. Terry Eagleton’s assertion that, “there are . . . two kinds of invisibility: one which arises from absence, and the other from over-obtrusive presence” applies almost perfectly.²⁴ Paradoxically, the role of the RN in Ireland encapsulated both the absent and the ever-present, at once the most potent element of a hegemonic power and a force operating in a country that consistently suffered from strategic “sea blindness” since independence. Chief of Staff of the Irish Defence forces, Vice-Admiral Mark Mellett, has described this phenomenon’s relevance to Ireland by noting that our tendency to ignore the sea, “has prevailed at political, diplomatic, bureaucratic and indeed military levels over the decades”, but to this list could be added the notion of historiographic sea blindness.²⁵ Recent trends have begun to redress this imbalance, particularly the work of Patrick Walsh who has examined the wide-ranging roles played by the RN in Ireland in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.²⁶ Three recent doctoral theses have continue this process, with Padhraic Ó Confhaola noting that

²¹ Howard Fuller, ‘The Warrior’s Influence Abroad: The American Civil War’, *International Journal of Naval History* 10, no. 1 (October 2013).

²² James Cable, *The Political Influence of Naval Force in History* (New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), 54–71; Rebecca Berens Matzke, *Deterrence through Strength: British Naval Power and Foreign Policy under Pax Britannica* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011).

²³ John B. Hattendorf, *Doing Naval History: Essays Toward Improvement* (Diane Publishing, 1997), 2.

²⁴ Terry Eagleton, quoted in Matthew Kelly, “Irish Nationalist Opinion and the British Empire in the 1850s and 1860s”, *Past and Present*, no. 204 (August 2009), 127.

²⁵ Brunnicardi, *Haulbowline*, 6.

²⁶ Walsh, ‘Ireland and the Royal Navy in the Eighteenth Century’.

“the sea was often seen as the domain of the British, an assumption aided by the fact that due to the overwhelming supremacy of the Royal Navy the sea was for all intents and purposes, British territory, and thus maritime issues were irrelevant to the struggle within Ireland.”²⁷ O’Brien’s thesis is the only one to directly consider the RN’s impact on Ireland, though in the Edwardian rather than Victorian period, while Ó Confhaola focused upon the Free State period, and Treacy upon the early republic.

The general trend in the Irish naval historiography that does exist has been outward looking, tending to identify the contributions of Irishmen to foreign navies, a process exemplified by the work of John de Courcy Ireland.²⁸ Others have focused on Ireland’s contributions to the manning of the RN (both officers and seaman) during different periods.²⁹ Cork was both the RN’s most fertile Irish recruiting ground and home to Ireland’s most perennially disaffected hinterland. It held the distinction of “providing more named officers per head of population than any other county in the British Isles” during the Napoleonic Wars, and ranked second only to County Tipperary in the same category during the years 1814-49.³⁰

As the focal point of the RN’s interaction with Ireland, histories of Haulbowline and Cork harbour have served as a useful starting point. This geo-strategically significant port holds a “pivotal position in the context of European security and defence”, commanding the sea-lanes of communication between

²⁷ Padhraic Ó Confhaola, ‘The Naval Forces of the Irish State, 1922-1977’ (Ph.D, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, 2009); John Treacy, ‘Irish Naval Service Operation, 1946-84’ (Ph.D, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, 2016); John Treacy, ‘Caveat Emptor - Building Ireland’s Small Navy 1945-49’, *Defence Forces Review* 13 (2016): 141–55; Cathal O’Brien, ‘The Royal Navy and Ireland, 1900-1922’ (PhD Thesis, University College Dublin, 2012).

²⁸ John de Courcy Ireland, *Ireland and the Irish in Maritime History* (Dun Laoghaire: Glendale Press, 1986); John de Courcy Ireland, ‘The Place of Ireland in Naval History’, *The Irish Sword* Vol. XXIII, no. 92 (Winter 2002): 211–34; John de Courcy Ireland, *Ireland’s Maritime Heritage* (Dublin: An Post, 1992).

²⁹ S. Karly Kehoe, ‘Accessing Empire: Irish Surgeons and the Royal Navy, 1840-1880’, *Social History of Medicine* Vol. 26, no. No. 2 (2012): 204–24; Paul Huddie, ‘British Military Recruitment in Ireland during the Crimean War, 1854-56’, *British Journal for Military History* 2, no. 1 (November 2015): 34–55; Michael Lewis, *The Navy in Transition 1814-1864: A Social History* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1965); Anthony Gary Brown, ‘Irish Sea-Officers of the Royal Navy, 1793-1815’, *The Irish Sword* XXI, no. 86 (Winter 1999): 393–429.

³⁰ Lewis, *The Navy in Transition 1814-1864: A Social History*, 41.

Europe and North America.³¹ This was particularly important given Ireland's enduring position as a stepping-stone to potential invasions of the British mainland, as had been attempted by the French in the 1790s. Local histories of fortifications and harbours have supplemented our understanding of the state's naval infrastructure in Ireland, and might be viewed as contributing to the work of the Palmerstown Forts Society, which is of particular relevance to the upgrade of Irish fortifications in the 1860s.³²

Despite the growth of interest in Ireland's naval and maritime past, a sense of a national 'naval' history has yet to emerge as it has in countries who remain in the British Commonwealth, which in turn has limited its ability to become synthesized within broader national histories.³³ Alvin Jackson's *The Two Unions*, for example, offers only a four-page discussion of the "Army and Navy" in Ireland, but of that four pages only fifteen lines are reserved to discuss the RN.³⁴ Similarly, Bartlett and Jeffery's *A Military History of Ireland* treats scantily of the RN in Ireland, particularly under the Union. Beyond the Bantry Bay expedition and the 1798 expeditions, its only treatment of the RN relates to the recruitment of

³¹ Brunnicardi, *Haulbowline*, 6; Niall Brunnicardi, *Haulbowline, Spike and Rocky Islands in Cork Harbour* (Fermoy: Éigse Books, 1982); J. M. Barry, *Queenstown for Orders: Contributions to the Maritime History of Queenstown Harbour, the Cove of Cork* (Cork: Sidney Publishing, 1999); J. M. Barry, *Old Glory at Queenstown: American Maritime Activity in the Queenstown Era 1800- 1922* (Cork: Sidney Publishing, 1999). Foreword.

³² Paul Kerrigan, *Castles and Fortification in Ireland* (Cork: Collins Press, 1995); Paul Kerrigan, 'Irish Coastguard Stations, 1858-67', *The Irish Sword* Vol. XIV, no. No. 54 (Summer 1980): 103-5; Vera McFadden, *Dunree - Guardian of Lough Swilly* (Ledreg Press, 2008); Declan O'Carroll, *Fort Dunree, Co. Donegal: A History* (Letterkenny, 1984); John de Courcy Ireland, *History of Dun Laoghaire Harbour* (Blackrock, Co. Dublin: Caisleán an Bhúrcaigh, 2001); Brian Fitzgerald, 'Ireland - An Islander's Perspective', *Defence Forces Review* 13 (2016): 189-96. www.palmerstownfortsociety.org.uk.

³³ Tony German, *The Sea Is at Our Gates: The History of the Canadian Navy* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990); William Johnston et al., *The Seabound Coast: The Official History of the Royal Canadian Navy, 1867-1939, Volume I* (Toronto: Tonawanda, N.Y: Dundurn, 2011); Richard D. Butler, 'The Roots and Evolution of the Royal Australian Navy' (Naval Postgraduate School, 2007); Brian Lavery, *Shield of Empire: The Royal Navy and Scotland* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2007); J.D. Davies, *Britannia's Dragon. A Naval History of Wales* (Gloucestershire: The History Press, 2013); Steven Paget, 'The "Best Small Nation Navy in the World"? The Twenty-First Century Royal New Zealand Navy', *Australian Journal of Maritime and Ocean Affairs* 8, no. 3 (September 2016): 230-56.

³⁴ Alvin Jackson, *Two Unions - Ireland, Scotland, and the Survival of the United Kingdom 1707-2007* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 196-200.

Irishmen into the navy, along lines more broadly treated of by Brown and Lewis (above).³⁵

During the centenary commemorations of the 1867 rising, de Courcy Ireland broadened his perspective to consider Fenianism by producing “A Preliminary Study of the Fenians and the Sea”, and “Fenianism and Naval Affairs”, but both remained consistent with the trend of viewing Irish naval historiography from a generally outward-looking perspective.³⁶ This contrasts strongly with the Canadian historiography of the Fenian raids, which consistently placed a premium on the role of the RN.³⁷ Where discussion of the unsuccessful Irish-American attempt at landing men and arms on the Irish coast, the voyage of the *Erin's Hope*, has entered the historiography it has often been presented in a vacuum, with a failure to acknowledge the overwhelming naval dominance of the RN. Most treatments comment strongly on the role of the Coastguard, but Steward and McGovern have significantly misconstrued the strategic balance at play by describing the possible face off between the small wooden sailing brigantine, armed with three field pieces and the 6,109 ton, 41-gun Ironclad HMS *Black Prince* with her complement of 125 Royal Marines as a “naval engagement they *likely* would have lost.”³⁸ Unlike Steward and McGovern, the author’s own investigation of the numerous Irish-American attempts to attack the island colony of Bermuda concluded that the response of the RN was critical throughout the Victorian period, and is in line with the argument presented in this chapter.³⁹

³⁵ Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffery (eds), *A Military History of Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), Bantry Bay 268-70, 1798 Expeditions 285-7, Irish officers in Royal Navy 299

³⁶ John de Courcy Ireland, ‘A Preliminary Study of Fenians and the Sea’, *Eire-Ireland* 47, no. 2 (Summer 1967): 36-54; John de Courcy Ireland, ‘Fenianism and Naval Affairs’, *The Irish Sword* VII (August 1967): 10-22.

³⁷ Robert Dallison, *Turning Back the Fenians: New Brunswick's Last Colonial Campaign* (Fredericton, NB: Goose Lane Editions, 2006), 84; Senior, *The Last Invasion of Canada: The Fenian Raids, 1866-1870*, 103; Vronsky, *Ridgeway*, 92-93.

³⁸ Patrick Steward and Bryan McGovern, *The Fenians: Irish Rebellion in the North Atlantic World, 1858-1876* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2013), 173 (my emphasis); See also, M.J. O'Mullane, *The Cruise of the 'Erin's Hope;' or "Gun-Running in '67.* (O'Connell Street, Dublin: Catholic Truth Society of Ireland, 1916).

³⁹ Devitt, ‘Fenianism’s Bermuda Footprint: Revolutionary Nationalism in the Victorian Empire’.

Historical Context –Repeal and Young Ireland

The negotiations surrounding the passage of the Act of Union in 1801 had promised greater economic benefits to Ireland from naval investment, a promise only partially fulfilled during the nineteenth century. The completion of Cork's Royal Alexandra Yard in 1822 and the foundation of the Royal Navy Hospital and a "zymotic hospital for the treatment of tropical diseases" offered the first economic fillip.⁴⁰ The station was reduced to a "care and maintenance" status by 1837 resulting in significantly decreased Admiralty expenditure in Ireland.⁴¹ Numerous politicians complained about the economic situation, with William Smith O'Brien taking up the cause. O'Brien presented his own financial calculations to the House of Commons, explaining that he had "carefully examined the Navy estimates for the current year 1843-44, and I find that out of a gross expenditure of £6,579,960, not more than £10,000" was scheduled by the Admiralty to be spent in Ireland.⁴² This was reflected in the fact that Irish affairs were considered sufficiently tranquil that no Admiral was stationed in Cork between June 1831 and June 1843. It was not until this point that a movement of national significance re-emerged that required significant naval intervention.

Daniel O'Connell's politicization and mass mobilization of the Irish peasantry and middle class in support of the repeal of the Act of Union elicited a multifaceted reaction from the British Government and the Irish Executive in the early 1840s. The naval component of this response has been virtually ignored. Rarely do descriptions of the RN's actions go beyond McCaffrey's description of the government sending a "fleet of three-deckers to Queenstown" to protect the Protestant Unionist minority.⁴³ Such a monolithic description belies the strategic complexities at play in Irish waters and on its navigable rivers. They tend to cast this activity as the start, rather than the culmination, of the RN's reaction to the growing Repeal threat. The growth in O'Connell's Monster Meetings saw two RN deployments to the Irish coasts of what would become known as the "Irish

⁴⁰ Brunicardi, *Haulbowline, Spike and Rocky Islands in Cork Harbour*, 19.

⁴¹ Brunicardi, 21.

⁴² HC Deb., 4 Jul., 1843. Vol. 70, cc 630-719.

⁴³ Lawrence McCaffrey, *Daniel O'Connell and the Repeal Year* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky, 1966), 205.

Squadron".⁴⁴ This squadron was supplemented with ships from the Channel Squadron to heighten the deterrent impact.

The first deployment of the Irish Squadron was a relatively brief visit in June 1843. In many ways this deployment set the tone for subsequent action, designed to accommodate both the fleet's regular summer exercises between Cove and Bantry bay, while also being on hand in the event that Repeal agitation escalated. By the start of May the government "suddenly took fright", resulting in an immediate response from the Admiralty.⁴⁵ Rear-Admiral Bowles in Cove outlined the logic of the squadron's distribution to Under Secretary Edward Lucas in Dublin Castle, by noting that

It is my intention to station one of the large steam vessels on the Shannon, one at Dublin and to keep one here [Cove], by which means any reinforcement required on any part of the coast to which they can approach may be conveyed with great certainty and celerity, if the General Officers commanding districts are apprized of this arrangement and informed that the commanders of all HM ships are directed to communicate and cooperate with them on every occasion where their services are required.⁴⁶

The ships of the squadron then under his command included *Malabar* (72 guns), *Tyne* (26), *Orestes* (18), *Racer* (16), *Lynx* (3), as well as the lightly armed paddle steamers *Cyclops*, *Rhadamanthus*, *Alban*. These vessels were supplemented with *Meteor*, *Myrtle*, and *Lightning*, being "small vessels of a light draft of water, chiefly calculated for River Service", whose uses are discussed below.⁴⁷

With many of the Repeal Association meetings taking place inland and outside County Cork, the RN proved invaluable in providing logistical support to the army. Strategic mobility was provide by HMS *Cyclops* and *Rhadamanthus* which accommodated 300 troops, while *Alban* could hold a further 200, thus dramatically increasing the utility of the British Army along the Irish coasts.⁴⁸ The RN also provided transportation of weapons and ammunition to the Board of Ordnance at

⁴⁴ *The Nation*, 21 Oct., 1843.

⁴⁵ Oliver MacDonagh, *The Emancipist. Daniel O'Connell 1830-47* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1989), 232.

⁴⁶ Admiral Bowles to U/S Edward Lucas, 21 Jun., 1843. NAI, CSORP 1843. Box 1261. M 4892.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

regular intervals, and in a manner that was more secure than overland transport.⁴⁹ Naval transport functions facilitated an otherwise unachievable speed of military responsiveness to the Irish Executive and the British Army in Ireland. When Irish historians write of Home Secretary Graham, who “poured military reinforcements into the country” without considering the role of the branch of power doing the “pouring”, the full discussion of the state’s response to such movements is significantly undermined.⁵⁰

The *Freeman’s Journal* understood the RN’s anti-Repeal functions as fluctuating between diplomacy and deterrence. They were busy “receiving parties of [the] ‘fashionable’ on board their respective vessels, and attending dinners, fêtes, and balls on shore,” a role they reciprocated with “true naval courtesy and characteristic hospitality.”⁵¹ Beyond this, however, the *Journal* hoped that the hospitality of the people of Cork would not distract from the squadron’s core function. They trusted that there would be no necessity to call for “a suppression of that species of ‘rebellion’ which at present engages the attention of the gallant sons of Neptune whom the authorities have sent among them.”⁵² The brevity of the initial deployment was highlighted by the *Nenagh Guardian* who noted on 1 July 1843 that elements of the squadron were already dispersing, “going nobody knows whither, as nobody can tell us for what they came.”⁵³

The second RN anti-repeal deployment corresponded with the Irish Executive’s increased anxiety that followed the Monster Meeting held at the Hill of Tara in mid-August 1843. Flag Captain Milne casually explained his understanding of the deployment to his brother by noting that the object of this visit was to “overcome the Repealers here”, a project which he expected to last several weeks, or “if Dan [O’Connell] is not obedient & quiet, may be for months.”⁵⁴ Whereas no admiral attended the Irish station in the previous decade, the *Freeman’s Journal* noted that

⁴⁹ See for example, Colonel Murdo (Royal Artillery) to Ordnance Office, Dublin, 6 May 1843. NAI, CSORP 1843. Box 1262. M 6338. (Also, M 6446 and M 6614).

⁵⁰ Angus Macintyre, *The Liberator, Daniel O’Connell and the Irish Party, 1830-47* (New York, NY: Macmillan Company, 1965), 269.

⁵¹ *Freeman’s Journal*. 8 Jul., 1843.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Nenagh Guardian*, 1 Jul., 1843.

⁵⁴ Milne to David Milne, 18 Nov. 1843, *The Milne Papers*, 170–1.

“We shall soon have the novel sight of three admirals’ flags [Bowles, Pigott, and Rowley⁵⁵] flying together in the harbour”, and that their stay was “likely to be considerable”.⁵⁶ By October, *The Nation* noted the dramatically increased size of the squadron then in Irish waters. The Irish Squadron was shortly to be substantially supplemented by the “Experimental Squadron” under the command of Admiral Sir C. Rowley (See Table 5.1).⁵⁷

Table 5.1. 'Irish' and 'Experimental' Squadrons

Vessel	Captain	Type
<u>Irish Squadron</u>		
Volage (26)	Capt W Dickson	Flagship of Admiral Bowles
Meteor	Lt Cmdr G Butler	Steamer
Lynx (3)	Lt Cmdr J T Nott	Brigantine
Rhadamanthus (4)	Cmdr Thomas Loen	Steamer
Snipe	Lt George Raymond	Cutter
<u>Experimental Squadron</u>		
Caledonia (120)	Capt A Milne	First Rate
St Vincent (120)	Capt R.F. Rowley &	Flag Ship of Admiral Sir C Rowley
Camperdown (104)	Capt F Brace	First Rate
Penelope (22)	Capt W Jones	Steam Ship
Lucifer	Capt W F Beechey	Steamer – Survey Duty
Comet	Cmdr G Frazer	Steamer – Survey Duty

Source: *The Nation*, 21 Oct., 1843

The increased RN presence saw a sustained effort to win what might later be called “hearts and minds” of the local population. This involved interaction with both gentry and peasantry, epitomized by Captain Milne aboard HMS *Caledonia*. He explained that the ship was “a great sight among the Paddys & on one day we had upwards of 1000 people on board.”⁵⁸ Apart from the standard duty of keeping a

⁵⁵ Rear-Admiral Bowles (Commander of the Squadron of Evolution, 1841-3), Rear Admiral Sir Hugh Pigott (Later commander of the Cork Station May 1844 – July 1847, Admiral Sir Charles Rowley, (Commander-in-Chief, Portsmouth 1842-5, former commanding officer in Cork, 1818-22).

⁵⁶ *Freeman's Journal*, 22 Sept., 1843.

⁵⁷ The ‘Experimental Squadron’ later became known as the ‘Squadron of Evolution’. This was a squadron that tested innovations in naval architecture in the 1830s and 1840s.

⁵⁸ Milne to David Milne, 17 Dec. 1843. *Milne Papers*, 171-2.

“good look out in case of any outbreak”, the effect was supplemented by sending the ship’s band ashore twice a week to play for the locals, an activity that “brings [in] all the families for miles around.”⁵⁹ On 12 December 1843 a party of local gentry were invited on board by Admiral Bowles and were treated to a gun exercise to demonstrate the efficiency and power of the ship. Milne described the events of the day.

Down we went to the Lower deck, & much to the amazement of the party, the exercise of the guns, cutlasses [&] Firemen was gone through, & they went away highly delighted after having been on board 2½ hours.⁶⁰

Here, the importance of allaying the fears of the landed Protestant gentry, who themselves felt under threat from the Repeal Movement, proved just as significant as the aim of deterring the Repealers themselves.⁶¹

One aspect of the deterrence and suppression of the Repeal movement that has been virtually ignored is the planning of RN operations on Ireland’s navigable inland waterways. The only reference to this role in the secondary literature is of “two naval vessels, one designed for river navigation” being ordered to Cork in early October 1843.⁶² Not only was the port of Waterford to be the staging point for patrols on the Rivers Barrow and Suir to deter any “apprehended attacks”, but also the Shannon was seen as providing the RN the ability to reach deeper inland.⁶³ The issue was highlighted by the Quarter Master General’s Office, which wrote to the Lord Lieutenant to suggest that “steamers on the Shannon would secure the communication from Athlone to Limerick, which is a very important consideration” in the event that a general insurrection disrupted the regular lines of supply and communication.⁶⁴ A well-formulated plan was required because the river’s banks were “in many parts boggy, thickly peopled, and the inhabitants who live by killing game and selling it, are expert shots and might be very troublesome

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² McCaffrey, *Daniel O’Connell and the Repeal Year*, 195.

⁶³ Edward Lucas (U/S) to Adm. Bowles, 8 Jun. 1843. NAI, CSORP 1843. Box 1262. A 7698.

⁶⁴ Quarter Master General (QMG) to Lord Lieutenant, 30 Oct. 1843. NAI, CSORP 1843. Box 1261. M 14,604.

opponents,” a situation analogous to the experience of riverine warfare during the war of 1812 or the Opium Wars.⁶⁵

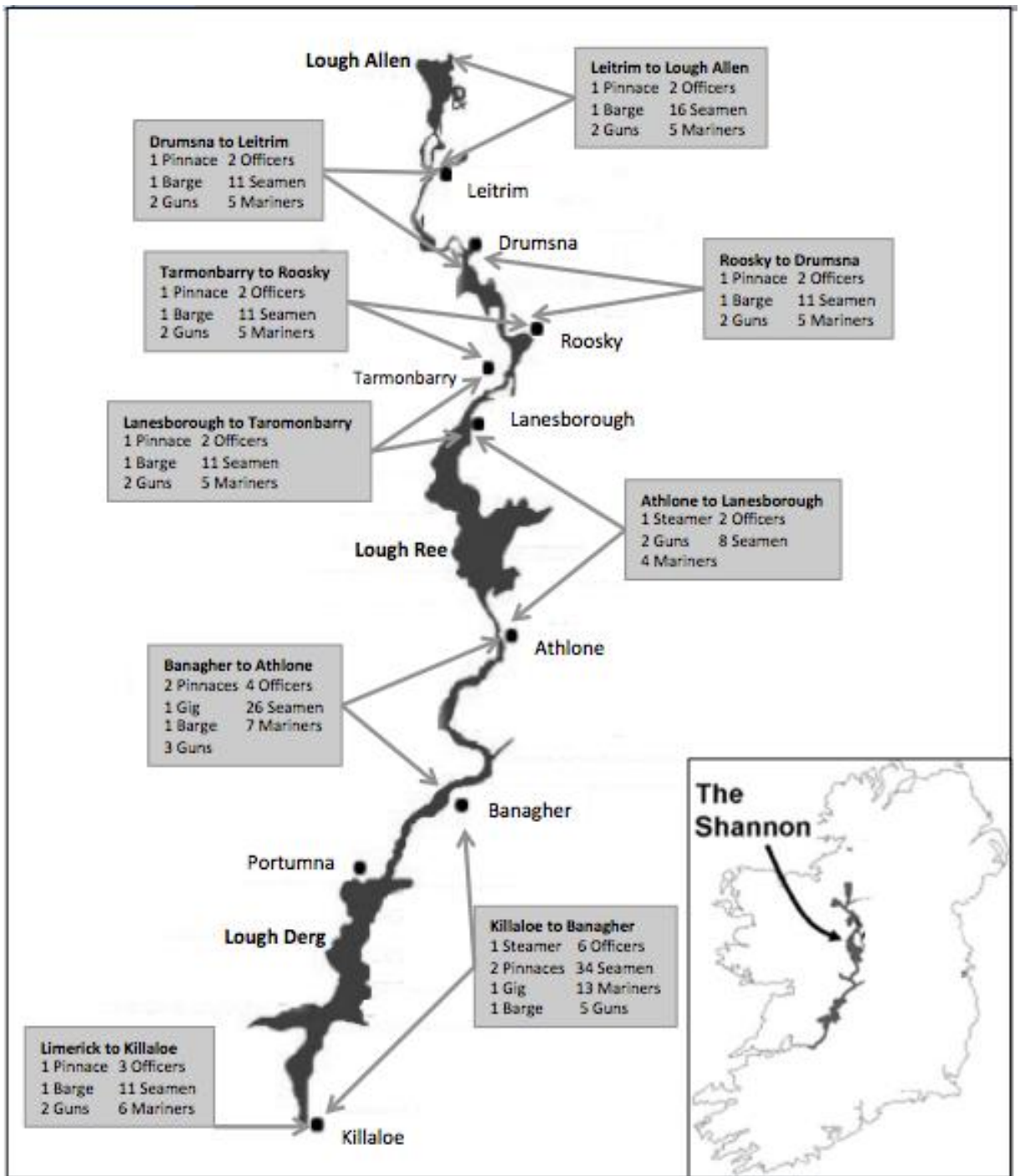
Numerous branches of state power cooperated in the formulation of what might be titled the “Shannon Plan”. In the first week of December 1843, Major General Sir Grey Campbell met with Captain Austen (second in command to Admiral Bowles and now stationed on the Shannon) and the Coastguard’s Commander, Sir James Dombraine, to consider the situation.⁶⁶ The meeting determined that a ‘naval demonstration’ on the Shannon was the most certain way of ‘keeping the country in the tranquil state.’⁶⁷ Two separate plans were developed, one limited, the other extended, which might be implemented in the event of the outbreak of insurrection (See Map 5.1 and Table 5.2).

⁶⁵ Major General Sir Grey Campbell to QMG, 8 Dec. 1843. NAI, CSORP 1843. Box 1262. M 17,542. (Enclosure). See also, Daniel Owen Spence, *A History of the Royal Navy: Empire and Imperialism* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2016); Armstrong, ‘Small Boats and Daring Men: Naval Irregular Warfare and the U.S. Navy in the Age of Sail’.

⁶⁶ General Blakeney to Eliot (C/S), 9 Dec. 1843. NAI, CSORP 1843. Box 1262. M 17,542.

⁶⁷ Grey Campbell to QMG, 8 Dec. 1843. NAI, CSORP 1843. (Enclosure). Box 1262. M 17,542. Original Emphasis.

Map 5.1. Royal Navy plan to assert control over the River Shannon, December 1843



Source: Major General Sir Grey Campbell to Quarter Master General, 8 Dec. 1843. NAI, CSORP 1843. Box 1262. M 17542, (Enclosure)

Table 5.2. Allocation of Forces for 'Limited' and 'Extended' Shannon Plans, December 1843

	Limited	Extended
Steamers	3	2
Pinnaces	3	10
Gigs	1	1
Moveable Barges	2	8
Guns	8	22
Officers	17	25
Seamen	57	139
Mariners	28	55
Command Areas	4	9

Source: Major General Sir Grey Campbell to Quarter Master General, 8 Dec. 1843. NAI, CSORP 1843. Box 1262. M 17542, (Enclosure)

The clustering and narrowness of the operational areas on the upper Shannon indicate that the “Extended” plan was far more than a passive naval demonstration. Although never implemented, the extended plan ought, perhaps, to be interpreted as a genuine desire on the part of the RN to exert strategic mobility and state power into the deepest interior of the country.

As noted, accurately quantifying the impact of specific deterrence and coercion measures is methodologically problematic, but it is suggested here that the RN deployment had a clear coercive impact. Even army officers conceded the desirability of having the RN close at hand, with the Military Secretary writing to Major General Downs that

the advantage of having such naval cooperation [is] likely to afford in the event of an insurrection, and the confidence that their appearance even now, gives to the Loyal inhabitants of this part of the country, cannot be too highly appreciated.⁶⁸

In a potent example of localized coercive impact, Commander Plunkett on board *Stromboli*, sent to patrol along the Dingle peninsula in November 1843, noted that Lord Ventry, the Magistrate and chief landowner of the district, was “very anxious for more frequent visits of Men of War.”⁶⁹ Moreover, Captain Austen reported that “the appearance of the Steam Vessels had induced a great portion of the people

⁶⁸ Col. Greaves, (Mil Sec) to Gen. Downes, 20 Dec., 1843. NAI, CSORP 1843. Box 1261. M 18,314.

⁶⁹ ‘Report of Commander E. Plunkett (HMS *Stromboli*)’ to Captain Austen and Admiral Bowles, 25 Nov., 1843. Enclosure in H Manner Scully (HO) to Eliot (C/S), 7 Dec., 1843. NAI, CSORP 1844. Box 1261. M 17,498.

originally refusing to come forward and pay the poor rates”, providing at least one tangible pointer to how successful its coercive capability was perceived to be.⁷⁰ As Plunkett noted in 1844, even when his vessel had appeared in isolated communities with the goal of providing aid to the locals, the result was the same as if they had come with military goals. He described a visit to Clew Bay to Admiral Bowles by noting that “most of the male adults quitted [sic] their houses at night and only returned by day, although every kindness was shown them, especially by the surgeon.”⁷¹ Even where counterinsurgency and deterrence were not the goals, they were often the effect.

The Royal Navy and Young Ireland

Like the anti-repeal measures of 1843, the deployments of the RN to combat the Young Irelanders had two main phases. The RN’s counterinsurgency role grew from a relatively *ad hoc* deterrence one in the spring to a much broader commitment in the summer and autumn of 1848. The first coincided with the furore surrounding the arrest and trial of John Mitchel. The second was a direct reaction to the outbreak of the abortive Young Ireland rebellion in the southeast of the country in late July, involving a far greater allocation of resources to Irish waters. These allocations fulfilled Irish naval counterinsurgency requirements while still serving as an effective squadron for the traditional role of “home” defence. Like its 1843 predecessor, the initial 1848 deployment was mainly a political exercise. The participation of one of the Victorian RN’s most famous commanders, Admiral Sir Charles Napier, has resulted in it receiving at least some historiographical attention.⁷² Earlier accounts, however, focus entirely on Napier’s activities at the expense of other significant aspects. The deployment throughout the year was dictated partly by strategic considerations and partly by personal foibles.

⁷⁰ Captain Austen to Adm Bowles, 25 Nov., 1843. Ibid.

⁷¹ Commander Plunkett to Admiral Bowles, 12 Jan., 1844. NAI, CSORP 1844. Box 1331, M 828.

⁷² Priscilla Napier, *Black Charlie: A Life of Admiral Sir Charles Napier KCB, 1787-1860* (Salisbury: M. Russell, 1995); Major-General Elers Napier, *The Life and Correspondence of Admiral Sir Charles Napier, K.C.B.*, vol. II (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1862); H. Koel Williams, *The Life and Letters of Admiral Sir Charles Napier, K.C.B.*, vol. II (London, 1917).

One key concern of the Admiralty was that larger ships of the line should maintain their dual responsibilities. Lord Auckland warned Lord Lieutenant Clarendon that “the bay of Dublin is not a place which our sailors are fond of for Line of Battle Ships,” with Cove a far more suitable anchorage, allowing those ships to remain together.⁷³ The second consideration, the desirability of Napier commanding in Dublin and Admiral Mackay remaining in Cork, was due to personal animosity between the two men, who “do not agree” on matters.⁷⁴ Napier’s ships of the line were distinctly unsuited to coastal patrolling, but “in the event of general disturbance they might furnish detachments and they may divert the good people of Cork.”⁷⁵ Therefore, rather than breaking up the ships of the line and dispersing them, the cohesion of “national defence” was maintained in parallel with the requirements of the Irish Executive.

The government’s anxieties around John Mitchel’s arrest and trial continued in April and May 1848 after he was convicted of the newly legislated charge of Treason Felony by Clarendon’s packed jury. In March 1848, and with a degree of alarm, *The Nation* reported that the naval force at Cork amounted to 18 ships, 378 guns and 2,700 men.⁷⁶ Admiral Napier put these resources to good use by landing Marines and organizing numerous field days and sham-fights on shore.⁷⁷ These practice landings are particularly important with regards to the provision of strategic mobility, because of the manner in which Mitchel had first been brought to the attention of the authorities. In November 1845, he penned an editorial for *The Nation* in which he described the best way to cripple the railway network that promised to bring every locality of Ireland “within six hours of the garrison of Dublin.” The strength of British coercion and the arrival of “war steamers”, Mitchel argued, should be viewed as reactions to signs of the “nationhood we have sworn to win for our children.”⁷⁸ Napier’s drills may have had a positive deterrence impact, but First Lord of the Admiralty Auckland worried

⁷³ Auckland to Clarendon, 14 Jun., 1848. Bod., MSS Clar. dep. Irish Box 69.

⁷⁴ Auckland to Clarendon, 30 Jul., 1848. Ibid.

⁷⁵ Auckland to Clarendon, 29 Mar., 1848. Ibid.

⁷⁶ *The Nation*, 18 Mar., 1848.

⁷⁷ Williams, *The Life and Letters of Admiral Sir Charles Napier, K.C.B.*, II:225. For details of specific actions see TNA, ADM 50/251, Rear Admiral Sir Charles Napier, Journal of HMS *St Vincent* for the Quarter ending 30th June 1848.

⁷⁸ ‘Threats of Coercion’ editorial. *The Nation*, 22 Nov., 1848.

about the long-term impact of such measures. He explained his thought process to Clarendon in May, advising that “It should be occasionally felt that they [the fleet] might be anywhere on the coast at a very short notice, but they should not be seen too often. They will lose their effect if they become cheap and are invited to every *soirée*.”⁷⁹

The summer deployment demonstrated the scale of resources that the Admiralty was prepared to allocate to Ireland, supporting Jan Morris’ assertion that the “British for their part were almost over prepared for them [the Young Irishmen].”⁸⁰ The RN blockaded the coast, both to isolate the rebellion from foreign aid and to try and stop the escape of the rising’s leaders. Auckland operated on the principle that “the wants of Ireland must be regarded before any other quarter”, insisting that the Viceroy “should be consulted before any change is made”. Although the Admiralty was besieged with requests for naval support “from Hong Kong to Nicaragua” and even from the mayor of Liverpool, Auckland viewed the RN’s naval counterinsurgency role in Ireland as paramount.⁸¹

Riverine activity on the scale of the 1843 Shannon plan is not evident from extant archival sources, though a war steamer was “instructed to move from point to point in that river.”⁸² A version of the 1843 plan may have been kept in readiness from five years earlier, though not implemented due to the south-easterly focus and quick suppression of the eventual rising. Nonetheless, a desire for a naval presence on Irish rivers was evident from early 1848. The paddle gun-vessel HMS *Pluto* was scheduled to visit Dublin in April, but Auckland doubted whether

she, or any other steamer would be useful in the Liffey as proposed by your ship owners. She would I think in a narrow tideway be herself in danger, and able to render but little assistance [...] Two or three row boats with howitzers would, I think, be better things.⁸³

⁷⁹ Auckland to Clarendon, 7 May 1848. Bod. MSS Clar. dep. Irish Box 1 (Bundle 10). (Original emphasis)

⁸⁰ Jan Morris, *Heaven’s Command: An Imperial Progress, Volume 1* (London: Faber and Faber, 1998), 168.

⁸¹ Auckland to Clarendon, 26 Apr. 1848. MSS Clar. dep. Irish Box 1 (Bundle 10).

⁸² Mackay to U/S Redington (Dublin Castle), 22 Sept., 1848. NAI, CSORP 1848. Box 1501, M 9,242.

⁸³ Auckland to Clarendon, 10 Apr. 1848. MSS Clar. dep. Irish Box 1 (Bundle 10).

Increased activity in Carrick-on-Suir, Co. Waterford two months after the rebellion's defeat, however, elicited a comparable riverine response. Auckland suggested the use of improvised gunboats, writing to Clarendon in mid-September, "I think our officers should make their own gun boats for this service, there can be no better gun boats than ships' launches or paddle box boats with carronades in their bows."⁸⁴ Admiral Mackay also applied for "a small steam vessel that might pass above Waterford bridge so as to command the river up to Clonmel," some thirty miles upstream.⁸⁵ Using the steamer, as well as converted smaller vessels, Captain Hall of HMS *Dragon* reported to Admiral Mackay that, "the unexpected arrival of such an efficient force above the bridge of Carrick so early in the morning, must have had a beneficial effect."⁸⁶ These patrols were particularly important because it was the "bargemen and watermen" who were considered to be the "most unruly of the inhabitants of the neighbourhood."⁸⁷ This activity demonstrated the clear ability of the RN to project power inland in a highly targeted manner to suppress potentially insurrectionary activity on Ireland's rivers.

The need to blockade the revolt and isolate it from foreign intervention must be judged against the backdrop of pan-European revolution in 1848, and the emergence of the Irish Republican Union in New York. This proto-Fenian group, operating in the aftermath of the Mexican-American War, ensured that the possibility of foreign intervention played an increasingly significant role in Admiralty thinking. The idea that foreign vessels had "conveyed to the coast of Ireland large supplies of arms and ammunition" and that these were supplemented with "scientific engineers, and that infernal machines" for use against the anchored fleet is common within military and naval correspondence.⁸⁸ Both Jenkins and Belchem support the view that "not only funds, but also arms and fighting men to

⁸⁴ Auckland to Clarendon, 17 Sept., 1848. Bod. MSS Clar. dep. Irish Box 1 (Bundle 10). A 'carronade' is a small but powerful, smooth-bore, cast iron cannon used by the RN in the period 1770-1850, but rendered obsolete by the new rifled artillery pieces.

⁸⁵ Mackay to Clarendon, 14 Sept., 1848. Bod. MSS Clar. dep. Irish Box 69.

⁸⁶ 'Report of Captain Hall', quoted in Mackay to Redington, 16 Sept., 1848. NAI, CSORP 1848. Box 1501, M 8,997.

⁸⁷ 'Report of Lieutenant Sherard Osborn' Commanding HMS Dwarf, 27 Sept., 1848. Enclosure in Mackay to Redington, 1 Oct., 1848. NAI, CSORP 1848. Box 1501, M 9,500.

⁸⁸ Napier, *The Life and Correspondence of Admiral Sir Charles Napier, K.C.B.*, Volume II, 193.

assist an Irish rising” had been forthcoming from the US, but neither examines the RN reaction to such threats.⁸⁹ At the end of July, Admiral Mackay commanding in Cork reassured Clarendon that “orders for searching and seizing arms or men landing shall now be issued immediately for all ports whether proclaimed or not.”⁹⁰

The sealing off of the coasts was increased in the immediate aftermath of the failed rising. Ships were ordered to “watch any attempts to land arms or parties of men, [and] suspicious persons or individuals that may be trying to escape from the coast.”⁹¹ This plan availed of the twenty-nine RN vessels in Irish waters by 6 August 1848 (See Map 5.2). It was envisioned that even this number could be further augmented, should Admiral Napier take on Lord Auckland’s advice, that “upon any pressing emergency”, such as an outbreak, he “must take it upon [himself] to hire steamers at Cork” to augment his fleet’s capabilities.⁹²

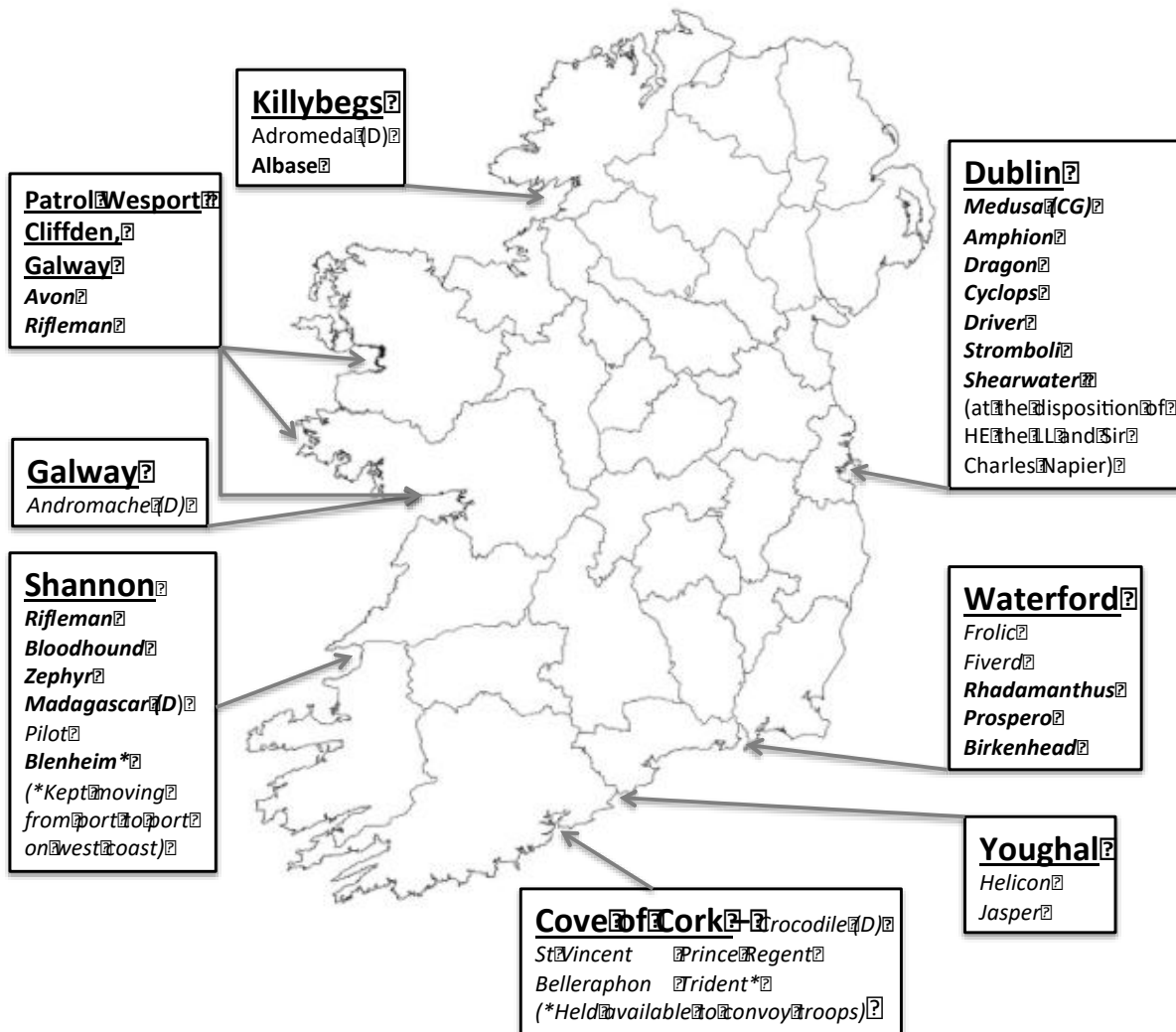
⁸⁹ John Belchem, ‘Republican Spirit and Military Science: The “Irish Brigade” and Irish-American Nationalism in 1848’, *Irish Historical Studies* 29, no. 113 (May 1994): 468; Brian Jenkins, *Fenians and Anglo-American Relations during Reconstruction* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1969), 13–18.

⁹⁰ Mackay to Clarendon, 30 Jul., 1848. Bod., MSS Clar. dep. Irish Box 69

⁹¹ Mackay to Clarendon, 6 Aug., 1848. Ibid.

⁹² Auckland to Napier, 3 Apr., 1848. Quoted in; Napier, *The Life and Correspondence of Admiral Sir Charles Napier, K.C.B.*, II:187.

Map 5.2. Stations of the Naval Vessels on the Coast of Ireland, 6 August 1848



Source: Rear-Admiral Mackay to Lord Lieutenant. Bodl., MSS Clar. dep. Irish Box 69
 Bold indicates steam vessels. (D) - Depot Vessels, (CG) - Coastguard

Table 5.3. Ships of the Line of the Squadron Commanded by Admiral Sir Charles Napier. Withdrawn from Cork to Devonport, 25 September, 1848

<i>St Vincent</i>	120 guns
<i>Prince Regent</i>	90
<i>Bellerophon</i>	78
<i>Blenheim</i>	56
<i>Amphion</i>	36
<i>Reynard</i>	6

Source: NAI, CSORP 1848. 3/620/22. Box 1501, M 9,311

Specific details of potential landings were quickly forwarded to Admiral Mackay, who coordinated such efforts with the Comptroller General of the Coastguard. Some early threats illustrate a tendency towards over-reaction. May 1848 saw reports that “vessels were being fitted out at Boston [to carry] arms and warlike stores to Ireland.”⁹³ One such vessel, a brigantine carrying rods of ash and iron bars for the construction of gunstocks, was reported bound for Belfast. The Collector of Customs there, however, pointed out the over-reaction by noting that no such vessel had appeared in his port, and “ventured to suggest” that this vessel was in fact bound for the port’s namesake in Belfast, Maine.⁹⁴ The reported departure of the brigantine *Tearnought* from Texas in mid-August further heightened security concerns.⁹⁵ The Irish-American plotters, however, seem to have been well aware of the RN’s actions, with one potential rebel commenting from New York that “some say the English fleet will give them a grand salute in the Irish Channel,” demonstrating the international impact of the RN’s deterrence efforts.⁹⁶

The continual need for deployments to Ireland in reaction to varying levels of threat had a long-term impact on both Ireland and the RN. By the end of 1848 the Admiralty had come to realize the necessity for a more permanent presence in Ireland. A base was needed that could serve as staging point for future naval counterinsurgency activities. Auckland explained to Clarendon that he was

⁹³ J. Dodson (Queen’s Advocate) to Palmerston, 25 May, 1848. TNA, HO 45/2253.

⁹⁴ C. Woffington (Belfast Customs) to J. Redington (HO), 24 May 1848. TNA, HO 45/2253.

⁹⁵ Mackay to Clarendon, 19 Aug., 1848. Bod, MSS Clar. dep. Irish Box 1 (Bundle 10).

⁹⁶ Thomas Reilly to John M. Kelly, 19 Jun., 1848. NLI, MS 10,511(2).

well aware of the excellence of the Harbour of Cork and of the importance of its position, and am desirous that it should become more than heretofore a port of resort for our shipping. It has been so frequently during the present year and it is further proposed that one of our Guard ships with attendant steamers in ordinary shall in future be stationed there.⁹⁷

Steamers held 'in ordinary', effectively those that were mothballed, could be quickly reactivated to fulfil a broad range of blue-, green-, or brown-water functions. The main benefit of this arrangement was that it would make Cork "more ostensibly and certainly a naval station and when again there may be activity with our fleets it may lead to much else."⁹⁸ That Clarendon was so intimately involved in every stage of these counterinsurgency activities is of particular significance because, as Foreign Secretary in the 1850s and 1860s, he would continue to guide his protégée Wodehouse on matters of Irish security.

The Royal Navy and Ireland in the 1850s

An interim stage in the developing relationship between Clarendon/Wodehouse and Irish-American conspirators is seen during the transatlantic invasion plan that was intended to exploit Britain's focus on the Crimean War, 1854-6. Known as the Cincinnati Filibusterers, the event illustrated the continued importance of the naval component to Irish security and serves as a bridge between the attempts in the 1840s and 1860s. Where this plan has been examined, it has only been considered in terms of its impact on Anglo-American relations and on Irish society more generally, rather than specifically on Irish security.⁹⁹ Numerous reports from British consuls in Cincinnati, New York, and Washington spoke of the plans of Thomas Francis Meagher who "intended landing on the Irish Coast with a body of armed men", including up to "10 or 11 ships with a large quantity of arms and ammunition on board", which might be landed on the western coast."¹⁰⁰ As the

⁹⁷ Auckland to Clarendon, 9 Dec., 1848. Bod, MSS Clar. dep. Irish Box 1 (Bundle 10).

⁹⁸ Auckland to Clarendon, 10 Dec., 1848. Ibid.

⁹⁹ David Sim, *A Union Forever: The Irish Question and U.S. Foreign Relations in the Victorian Age* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 69–84; Sim, 'Filibusters, Fenians, and Contested Neutrality - The Irish Question and U.S. Diplomacy, 1848-1871', 267–71; Paul Huddle, *The Crimean War and Irish Society* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015), 35–42.

¹⁰⁰ W Cowper (Whitehall) to Larcom, 24 Apr., 1855. NAI, CSORP 1856. Box 745, 4177. (Enclosure containing reports of NY Consul Barclay 31 Mar., 1855. A précis of these reports can be found in NLI, Larcom Papers, MS 7515, 1-42.

year progressed, the Admiralty promised increased naval defence for Ireland by indicating that they would “despatch some ships of war, as soon as they are ready, to Irish ports.”¹⁰¹ When the “impractical [...] wild and utterly extravagant” plans petered out, the need for a naval detachment in Ireland diminished, and the Chief Secretary’s Office Registered Papers contains no evidence of an increased naval presence in Ireland.¹⁰² It does, however, have a heightened significance relative to Fenianism because it was among the first interactions that the young Wodehouse had with Ireland. As a twenty-nine year old permanent Under Secretary in the Foreign Office, he weighed in with his opinion that information should be communicated to the Irish Government relating to “passengers who arrive [in Liverpool] from the United States, and proceed immediately to Ireland” in precisely the manner he would prescribe a decade later.¹⁰³

Just as Comerford argued that Anglo-French tension was a contributory factor in the emergence of Fenianism, so too might we point to the naval reaction to that threat as contributing to the eventual suppression of the Fenian rising. The most useful way of contextualizing the scale of the eventual deployment on the coasts of Ireland in response to Fenianism comes through a detailed examination of the strategic planning that was developed to defend against France which would begin “with an invasion of Ireland”.¹⁰⁴ Notable navalists provided their strategic assessment in memoranda that provided differing means by which to achieve victory over France. Rear-Admiral Milne (formerly of HMS *Caledonia* and now a Naval Lord in the Admiralty) was charged in 1858 with drawing together a “Memorandum on the State of the Navy” in which he ranked the importance of a “Squadron for the Irish and Bristol Channels” as the third highest in his list of six priorities, behind only “A Channel Fleet for Home defence” and “A North Sea Squadron” to deal with Continental aggressors.¹⁰⁵ Ireland’s position within this system is unclear, however, given that in the event of attack “the Squadron in the

¹⁰¹ Waddington (HO) to Larcom, 15 Oct., 1855. NAI, CSORP 1856. Box 745, 8967.

¹⁰² Sim, ‘Filibusters, Fenians, and Contested Neutrality - The Irish Question and U.S. Diplomacy, 1848-1871’, 269.

¹⁰³ Wodehouse (FO) to Waddington (HO), 5 Nov., 1855. Enclosure in, Waddington to Larcom, 9 Nov., 1855. NAI, CSORP 1856. Box 745, 9511.

¹⁰⁴ Comerford, ‘Anglo-French Tensions and the Origins of Fenianism’, 157.

¹⁰⁵ Milne, *Memorandum on the State of the Navy*, Admiralty Office, April-May 1858, *Milne Papers*, 685.

Irish and Bristol Channels should especially protect the Coal Ports of Wales.”¹⁰⁶
 That the number of ships of all types that would be deployed to Ireland to combat Fenianism the following decade exceeded these invasion-based estimates speaks to the high level of threat that the Admiralty considered the Fenians to pose.

Table 5.4. Proposed deployment of ships to Ireland relative to those of the Channel Fleet

Location	Ships of the Line	Frigates	Sloops	Gun Vessels	Men
Channel Fleet	10	12	20	60	21,300
Irish and Bristol Channel	4	8	10	-	8,800
Total in service	35	47	65	60	66,400
% of Irish allocation relative to Channel Fleet	40%	66%	50%	-	42%
% of Irish Allocation relative to Total	11.5%	17%	15%	-	13%

Source: Memorandum on the State of the Navy, Admiralty Office, Apr.-May 1858, Milne Papers, 685

First Lord of the Admiralty Richard Saunders Dundas offered the most insightful strategic view of Ireland at this point. Not only did he overtly consider his number one priority of defence to be “the protection of the British Channel and the shores of Great Britain and Ireland”, but he differentiated between the defensive expectations for the two regions. In calculating his estimates of the vessels necessary, he “determined that it should combine *security* to the shores of England, and *effectual protection* to Ireland”, thereby relegating its relative importance.¹⁰⁷ Even the distribution of vessels differed in Dundas’ opinion. He envisioned three main areas of deployment totalling 36 vessels; *Cork* (2 Sail of the Line, 2 Large Frigates, 4 Sloops, 6 small vessels, and 6 Gun-boats), *Bantry and Shannon* (2 Sail of the Line, 2 Large Frigates, 2 Sloops, 6 Gun-boats), and ‘*North of Ireland*’ (1 Frigate and 3 Sloops). These formations, however, could be combined with other detachments to provide a “certain amount of force at a short notice,

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 686.

¹⁰⁷ Saunders Dundas, *Memorandum on the State of the Navy*, Admiralty, June 1858, *Milne Papers*, 703-704. My emphases.

upon any one particular point.”¹⁰⁸ This would naturally be impossible to implement to counter a “descent of the Fenian steamers” as they would later be imagined, but it illustrates the degree to which the small-scale infiltration threat was far from the minds of the Naval planners who remained focussed on the “Blue Water” engagement, rather than the “Brown Water” issues of coastal patrols, naval irregular warfare, and counterinsurgency. The problem would have to be addressed anew by Wodehouse and the Duke of Somerset the following decade.

It must be emphasised that while these speculative defensive designs were never implemented, they did provide some of the impetus behind the *Royal Commission on the Defence of Great Britain* (1859). The shift towards large-scale fortifications on land for specific ports was pre-empted here by William Fanshawe Martin who in 1865 identified Berehaven as a position of strategic importance, worthy of being a squadron head-quarters and a harbour that “should be so fortified as to be beyond the risk of capture, and to be a protection to our shipping.”¹⁰⁹ Here, at least was an acknowledgement of the strategic significance and necessity for investment in one Irish harbour outside Cork, a sentiment that would be echoed at the height of the Fenian invasion scares by both Wodehouse and Rose.¹¹⁰

The fortifications which resulted, pejoratively known as Palmerston’s Follies, were focussed mainly on the English Channel coast, and were primarily for the defence of the large dockyards such as Portsmouth. In the early 1860s limited money was provided to upgrade the existing fortifications at the mouth of Cork harbour (Forts Camden and Carlisle), while new batteries were developed to “protect the fleet anchorages” at Berehaven and Lough Swilly.¹¹¹ While some investment in coastal batteries were made on Belfast Lough and on Dublin Bay they paled, in comparison to the string of forts around the significant southern English port cities. The report of the Royal Commission of 1859 issued an initial estimate of £11,850,000, which represented one of the largest infrastructure

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 706-7.

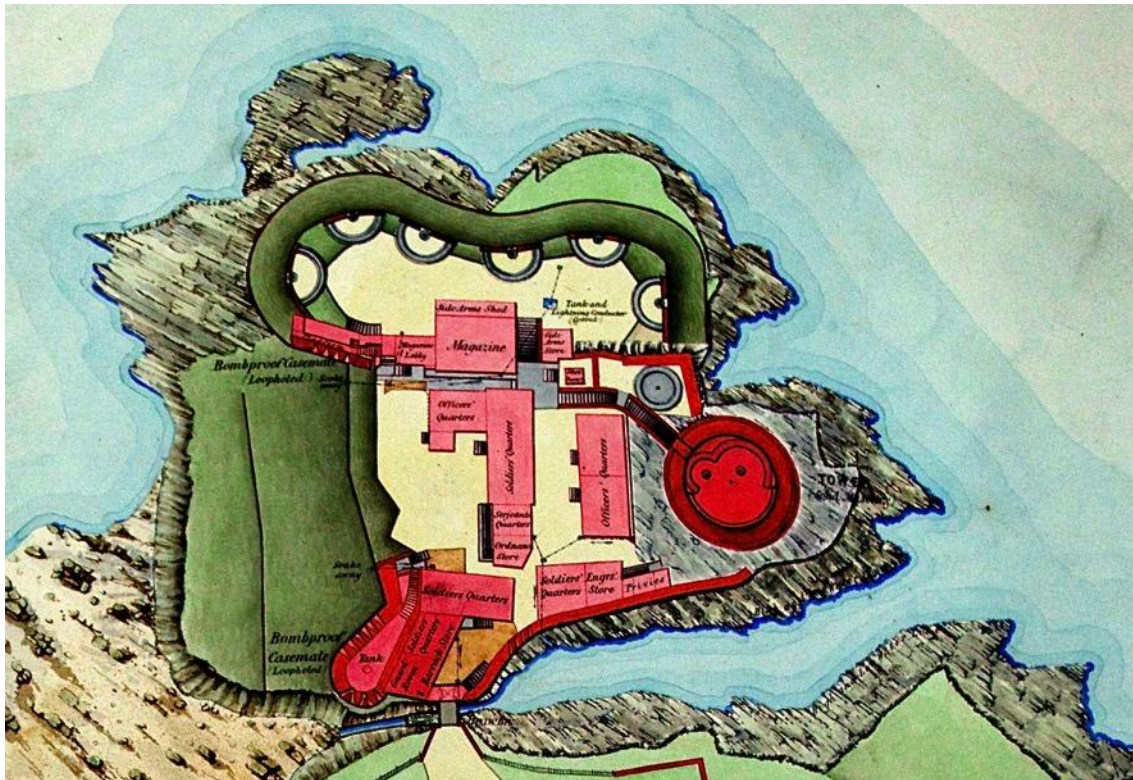
¹⁰⁹ HC Deb., 26 May 1865. Vol. 179, 934.

¹¹⁰ Rose to Wodehouse, 20 Sept. 1865, Bodl., Kim. MS Eng.C 4032, 106-109.

¹¹¹ Paul Kerrigan, *Castles and Fortifications in Ireland* (Cork: Collins Press, 1995), 249.

programmes of the age, particularly in comparison with the meagre provision for Irish improvements.¹¹² Unlike Wales, whose enormous resources of coal and established dockyards had become a central concern of the RN in the steam age, Ireland lacked the natural resources and naval infrastructure worth protecting.¹¹³

Map 5.3. Fort Dunree, Co. Donegal, April 1860



Source: TNA, WO 78/4387. Drawn by William Harvey, Revised by Thomas Jordan. Ordnance Survey Office, Phoenix Park Dublin. April 1860

John Francis Maguire (MP for Dungarvan) consistently argued against the neglect of Haulbowline. This investment had been dangled as “one of the inducements for passage in 1800 of the Act of Union had been a promise that Cork would have a naval base as important as Plymouth or Portsmouth”, but he claimed had yet to materialize.¹¹⁴ As Sean O’Reilly has noted, between 1801 and 1806 Lord Lieutenant Hardwick’s “call for the need for fortifications was an enduring fixation.”¹¹⁵ Between the Crimean War and 1864 Maguire lobbied heavily. In June

¹¹² Nick Dyer, *British Fortification in the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries* (Gosport: Vector Productions for Palmerston Forts Society, 2003), 1-4.

¹¹³ Davies, *Britannia’s Dragon. A Naval History of Wales*, 172; Steven Gray, ‘Black Diamonds: Coal, the Royal Navy, and British Imperial Coaling Stations, circa 1870-1914’ (PhD Thesis, University of Warwick, 2014), 9.

¹¹⁴ De Courcy Ireland, *Ireland and the Irish in Maritime History*, 238.

¹¹⁵ Sean O’Reilly, ‘Completing the Union: The Politics of Implementation in Ireland, 1801-1815.’ (PhD Thesis, Trinity College, Dublin, 2014), 195.

of that year, accompanied by a delegation of Munster gentry, Maguire was received by Palmerston in a campaign to secure additional investment in Cork Harbour.¹¹⁶ Their petition rested on four major arguments; the layout, depth, and shelter provided by the harbour; its accessibility at all stages of the tide; the strategic advantage of its westerly location; and the inequality of naval expenditure in Ireland relative to its tax contributions to imperial coffers. By including this fourth, fiscal consideration, however, they inadvertently inhibited their own argument because it “drew attention away from the other arguments, which were by far the stronger ones”.¹¹⁷ The arrival of Wodehouse that November saw Dublin Corporation continue the strong lobbying effort, with their address noting that

At Queenstown your Excellency will see one of the finest harbours in the world, where in time of war not only the armed fleet of England, but a great portion of her mercantile marine were frequently under the necessity of congregating. But your Excellency will learn with surprise that such a station, so admirably adapted for the building and the repairs of vessels of war has been constantly neglected by successive Governments, its geographical situation in Ireland creating jealous and unjust opposition.¹¹⁸

The multiple avenues of lobbying resulted in steady progress. By the time of the passage of the Naval Estimates in May 1865, an additional £150,000 of a sum total of £330,000 was allocated for a wet basin and two further docks for Cork harbour, in addition to the smaller fortification work already under way.¹¹⁹

With the development of Irish fortifications proceeding at a slow pace, Ireland still relied predominantly upon the “wooden walls” of the RN as its primary means of defence. Speaking in 1865, in the period immediately preceding the peak of the Fenian invasion threats, Henry Lowry-Corry, MP for Tyrone (and later First Lord of the Admiralty under the Derby Administration 1867-8), outlined the general position eloquently. It was, he noted,

far more important to keep an enemy out of the country than to foil him when in it, and the best mode of defeating an attempt at invasion would be to have the means of maintaining our fleet in a state of efficiency, for

¹¹⁶ The aristocrats consisted of Lord de Vesci, Earl of Cork; Lord Doneraile; Lord Midleton, Earl of Dandon; Lord Fermoy, and were accompanied by 9 MPs.

¹¹⁷ Daire Brunnicardi, *Haulbowline*, 45.

¹¹⁸ Address of Dublin Corporation to the Lord Lieutenant, *Canadian Freeman*, 23 Nov. 1864.

¹¹⁹ HC Deb., 26 May 1865. Vol. 179, 929.

which the present accommodation in the dockyards was wholly inadequate.¹²⁰

Thus the pattern of naval dockyard development must be seen as fundamental to home defence. The primacy of their deterrent function were linked to, and set the tone for, the upcoming defence of Ireland. For Lowry Corry, the “dockyards were the jewels, the fortifications only the caskets to protect them”.¹²¹ While it must be noted that the infrastructure provided was not specifically aimed at combatting Fenianism, the later naval counterinsurgency effort benefitted substantially from such improvements, and could be considered part of the same defensive ecosystem.

Early 1860s – The Channel Squadron

A visit of the Channel Squadron to Belfast and Dublin in September 1863 presents a perfect case study with which to examine the RN’s desire to win over the ‘hearts and minds’ of the Irish. The visit was a part of a broader cruise to eleven ports in England, Scotland, and Ireland designed to “promote the Navy and reassure the mercantile community by exhibiting the latest naval hardware.”¹²² In particular the visits were a way of demonstrating the potency of HMS *Warrior*, commissioned in 1861, to show her as “the most powerful warship in the world [which] acted as a uniquely potent symbol of British prestige and [was] an object of universal interest.”¹²³ The cruise was commanded by Rear-Admiral Sir Sydney Dacres who would return to Irish waters two years later in far less agreeable circumstances.

Dacres explained the logic of the visit to the Mayor and Corporation of Belfast by saying that it was, “a most important thing that the fleet he commands should visit every port of Great Britain, because the more the ships are shown, the more they will be understood, and the more they are understood, the more they will be trusted.”¹²⁴ This was necessary because few in Ireland had “any idea of the vast size, tremendous armament, and titanic power of the ironclad ships in the

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ HC Deb., 26 May 1865. Vol. 179, 922-6.

¹²² Lambert, *HMS Warrior 1860*, 45.

¹²³ Lambert, 45.

¹²⁴ *Belfast Express*, 12 Sept. 1863.

squadron.”¹²⁵ The aim of the British government in sending the fleet to the “Islands of the West”, Dacres continued, was to inspire the inhabitants “with confidence, by exhibiting visually some of the ‘iron walls’ provided for the preservation from foreign or alien foes of their homes, their property, and their liberties.” Similarly, to foreign governments it must be held “as evidence that England is ready for every contingency.”¹²⁶ In the context of the US Civil War, in which the Fenians were beginning to thrive, this final assertion is particularly telling.

Opinion on the upcoming visit was mixed, with support coming from the gentry, the business community, railways, and the lion’s share of Dublin Corporation, but with significant resistance from elements of the nationalist community. This conflict is best encapsulated in the reporting of A.M. Sullivan’s objection to Dublin Corporation’s address of welcome to Admiral Dacres. “When”, Sullivan asked pointedly, “did any British fleet come here unless for invasion?”¹²⁷ He focussed on the RN’s role during the Famine when “this British fleet lay with its guns shotted [sic] for duty... but had not a deck on which to lay food for the dying.”¹²⁸ *The Nation* supported this view by arguing that the fleet’s “guns give no promise of liberty to the Irish nation – they are guardians only of her slavery.”¹²⁹ The *Irish Times* dismissed the protests as “the vexatious opposition of a microscopic minority”, while the *Freeman’s Journal* published a letter from Stephen Spring Rice, who felt compelled to debunk Sullivan’s appealing, if apocryphal, assertion.¹³⁰ He confirmed that the Government and Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty had furnished his famine relief association with “every assistance they might require in storeroom, ships, service, and the cooperation of naval establishments.”¹³¹ The *Journal* also highlighted the paradoxical fact that many of those who protested against the visit relied on that same fleet for the protection of their innate liberties and from the “imaginary Irish Republic, whose secret sympathisers at home have been so recently and so emphatically denounced by the

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ *Belfast Express*, 24 Sept., 1863.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 22 Sept., 1863. (Sullivan was editor of *The Nation*)

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ *The Nation* 26 Sept., 1863. The address was carried by a comfortable majority of 21 to 5.

¹³⁰ *Irish Times*, 22 Sept., 1863.

¹³¹ *Freeman’s Journal*, 25 Sept., 1863. Stephen Spring Rice had served as the secretary of the charity fund, the ‘British Association’ during the famine.

Irish Episcopal body.” This sentiment places the RN’s future role in the interdiction of Fenianism front and centre, even at this early stage in the movement’s development.¹³²

The squadron’s arrival produced a profound impact. One account is indicative of the level of intimidation and deterrence expected by the Admiralty.

As the huge dimensions of the ships gradually revealed themselves, it would be impossible to conceive anything more imposingly grand than the great war ships, gliding in majesty and power through the sunlit waters of the ocean, that smiled into a thousand beauties, as if to welcome her most favoured gallant sons and the splendid craft which bore them.¹³³

The arrival of the “vulcanised leviathans” was considered a suitably impressive sight to naval expert and layman alike.¹³⁴ The trains of the Dublin and Wicklow Railway Company, for whom the day was “one of the very best, financially considered, [they] ever had”, brought many thousands to the Kingstown pier, while the *Kingstown*, *Universe*, and *Caledonia* steamers made continuous round trips to the fleet at anchor approximately a mile and a half from the harbour.¹³⁵ Beyond the technical factors on display, such as the armaments and engineering works, the squadron did all in its power to guarantee that its visitors enjoyed their visit by opening up their ships to them. It was conceded that, “everything that could tend to this end [facilitating the visitors] was done by the officers and men, all of whom received the visitors with the greatest courtesy.”¹³⁶ On one day alone, Sunday 27 September, it was reported that some 6,000 people had visited the fleet, and that with an improvement in the weather, they might expect still more visitors the following day. Although no final tally appears in newspaper reports, based on cumulative figures from both sides of the media, a conservative estimate would indicate that at least 20,000 visitors saw the new “iron walls” up close. This also gave the opportunity for the public to get a taste of “man-of-war life”, with the

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ *Freeman’s Journal*, 28 Sept., 1863.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ *Express*, 30 Sept. 1863.

¹³⁶ *Irish Times*, 29 Sept., 1863.

potential for greater Irish recruitment in the future, attracting those who might be “glad to join and to add their quota to the list of Her Majesty's sailors.”¹³⁷

The fleet’s hospitality was reciprocated with a civic luncheon and a Gala Ball in the Rotunda, “on the grandest possible scale, and in a manner worthy of the wealth, importance, and loyalty” of the second city of the British Empire.¹³⁸ It was attended by 260 gentlemen and officers including Admiral Dacres, and drew attention from all quarters, particularly those who hoped that “the presence of the fleet will give circulation to a certain amount of money amongst the depressed traders of this city.”¹³⁹ Elaborate decorations were designed to further reinforce the links between the Ireland and the RN, and the visiting officers were also serenaded with a song from entrepreneurial Glendalough hotelier hoping to attract business.¹⁴⁰

Hurrah, the Fleet, the Channel Fleet,
Lies Moored in Dublin bay;
Great mountains sound a welcome round,
And every vale is gay.
Sweet Wicklow’s hills, her streams and rills,
In friendly chorus greet:
Hark! Foaming calls from waterfalls,
Hurrah, the Channel Fleet.¹⁴¹

Similar public celebrations and festivities were supported by “leading citizens, the railway companies, and other public bodies,” all of whom had considerable economic interest in the success of the visit.¹⁴² Those who benefitted from the financial injection produced, however, were described acerbically as succumbing to “Channel Fleetism”, showing how the fleet’s visit could aggravate as well as intimidate potential rebels.¹⁴³ These activities accord perfectly with recent description of *Pax Britannica* during which “warships were more than merely a means of projecting physical military power; they also had a psychological impact, being the manifestation of Britain’s industrial, and economic supremacy.”¹⁴⁴

¹³⁷ *Irish Times*, 9 Nov., 1863.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ *Irish Times*, 21 Sept., 1863.

¹⁴⁰ *Freeman’s Journal*, 28 Sept., 1863. *Irish Times*, 29 Sept. 1863.

¹⁴¹ *Irish Times*, 25 Sept., 1863.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ *Irish Canadian*, 4 Nov., 1863.

¹⁴⁴ Spence, *A History of the Royal Navy: Empire and Imperialism*, 58.

Naval Scares

The naval component of Irish defence became ever more pressing due a growing fear of an imminent invasion of Ireland that peaked in 1865. Numerous versions of this fear existed, ranging from the piecemeal arrival of Fenians on commercial steam packets, to the possibility of large-scale filibustering expeditions, and even the latent fear that the navies of other countries posed an on-going threat. These fears were fuelled by recently returned Irish-American Fenians who, “speak of the invasion of Ireland by a Fenian fleet as a certainty within the next five months.”¹⁴⁵ This apprehension was echoed throughout the British Empire, from England and Scotland, to the corners of the empire in Canada, Bermuda, New Zealand, and even the Shetland Islands.¹⁴⁶ Some proved true, as in Canada, others reflected the growing anti-Fenian paranoia, as in the Shetlands, while the example of Bermuda demonstrates the utility of invasion scares as tools of misinformation on the part of the Fenians to distract attention from intended targets.

In March 1865, William Johnson MP (Deputy Head of the Orange Order) communicated the concerns of a Canadian counterpart who had been given information by one of the delegates to the recent Fenian Convention in Cincinnati. In a manner that would surely have reminded Wodehouse of his experiences with the Cincinnati Filibusterers, he explained that

as many delegates as can get away, will start for Ireland, England, France, and the Continent by every steamer that leaves this country from the middle of April. That by steamboat, rail and other modes of conveyance 30,000 delegates from this side of the water originally, but at the proposed time from all points of the compass, will arrive in Dublin on the same day.¹⁴⁷

The implication here is not of a massive amphibious landing, but of a well-orchestrated, centrally coordinated movement. Responding to this incremental

¹⁴⁵ *Irish Canadian*, 11 Oct., 1865.

¹⁴⁶ Elaine W. McFarland, ‘A Reality and Yet Impalpable: The Fenian Panic in Mid-Victorian Scotland’, *The Scottish Historical Review* 77, no. 204 (October 1998): 199–223; Devitt, ‘Fenianism’s Bermuda Footprint: Revolutionary Nationalism in the Victorian Empire’, 155–60; Jenkins, *The Fenian Problem*, 167; Bender, ‘The “Piniana” Question: Irish Fenians and the New Zealand Wars’; Senior, *The Last Invasion of Canada: The Fenian Raids, 1866-1870*. “The Fenians in Shetland – Irish Privateers at work – Extraordinary Story”, *The Nation*, 11 Aug., 1866.

¹⁴⁷ Johnston to Wodehouse, Mar., 30, 1865. Bodl., Kim. Ms Eng C 4024, 98-9.

threat required coordination between the Admiralty and the Irish and English Constabulary in a sustained manner, considered below.

A typical example of the fears of a larger-scale Fenian landing on the coast can be seen in Donegal in the early winter of 1865. The *Derry Standard* reported that Derry's inhabitants had been thrown into a state of "much excitement" amid a series of conflicting reports. Captain Fitzmaurice RN had received "peremptory orders" from Dublin Castle to speed to Lough Swilly to intercept a "very suspicious looking American steam craft" that had arrived there four days earlier.¹⁴⁸ The article described the impact of the steamer's arrival.

All sorts of exaggerated rumours were afloat that her decks were crowded with Fenians in green uniforms, and that no less than the famous head centre, General O'Mahony, as he is called, was on board. This, it will be readily supposed, created no small alarm in timorous minds, and no doubt was entertained by credulous folks that all the necessary munitions of war were stored in the depths of the formidable looking craft which reports stated had a very ugly appearance, being a diabolically black outline, and lying low in the water.¹⁴⁹

The seriousness of this and similar reports is seen in the Admiralty's instruction that the intercepting vessels should be given "any coals and provisions required" to their destination.¹⁵⁰

While the real story of the vessel responsible, a trading ship *United Kingdom*, was mundane, the Executive's reaction is telling. Upon its initial sighting, the local coastguard "at once communicated with the magistrates here, who telegraphed with the Castle authorities, and the consequence of this was the orders of Captain Fitzmaurice (HMS *Nightingale*) to proceed to Lough Swilly."¹⁵¹ A search of the vessel revealed a woman with a "formidable revolver" who was thought to be "the wife of one of the leaders of Fenianism in America."¹⁵² The suspect received both a Coastguard and Police escort to Glasgow to verify the particulars of her intended visit. Thus five separate branches of state power in Ireland cooperated and coordinated to deal with this one grossly exaggerated event (Coastguard,

¹⁴⁸ *Irish Canadian*, Nov., 8, 1865.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ Admiralty to Frederick, 17 Feb. 1866, TNA, ADM 1/6574.

¹⁵¹ *Irish Canadian*, 8 Nov., 1865.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

magistrates, Dublin Castle, navy, and police), and even merited a letter from the Lord Lieutenant to the ailing Prime Minister.¹⁵³ The event, which lasted eight days from sighting to release of the ship, was resolved “much to the relief of the terrified inhabitants of the district.”¹⁵⁴

Another far-fetched invasion hoax emerged in August 1866 that illustrates the scale of the Fenian invasion scares. Numerous reports emerged of a series of raids on Unst and Lerwick in the Shetlands. Seven or eight “steamers” and sloops were reported to be involved in sheep and cattle raids, kidnap and ransom. The *Evening Mail* reported that,

Three vessels remained in the offing, while five steamed into port, and landed twelve boats’ crews armed with cutlasses and revolvers, who plundered shops and banks, and carried away the sheriff, the collector of customs and some magistrates.¹⁵⁵

Far from being Fenian in origin, it transpired that the ship was “manned by Germans of different nationalities”, but it was reported under the headline “The Fenians in Shetland – Irish Privateers at work – Extraordinary Story”. This allowed *The Nation* to hypothesise that if “the *Tornado* is a Fenian, and that she is making for Great Britain by Shetland, it shows that the Fenian Executive knew more than one of the weak points on the British coast.”¹⁵⁶ That these events were reported internationally in titles such as the *Evening Mail*, *The Scotsman*, *The Nation*, the *Observer*, the *Boston Pilot*, and the *Canadian Freeman* indicate the widespread interest in Fenian naval affairs and the purchase of the invasion scares.¹⁵⁷

The influence of foreign navies in Irish waters was also viewed with suspicion, evident in the fact that American naval recruitment in Ireland was described by the *Army and Navy Gazette* as a “Federal Invasion of Ireland”.¹⁵⁸ The activity of the USS *Kearsarge*, in particular, was viewed as threatening delicate

¹⁵³ Wodehouse to Palmerston, 5 Oct., 1865. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4033, 155-62.

¹⁵⁴ *Irish Canadian*, 8 Nov., 1865.

¹⁵⁵ *Evening Mail*, 9 Aug., 1866.

¹⁵⁶ *The Nation*, 11 Aug., 1866. For exposure of the hoax see, *The Scotsman*, 10 Aug., 1866.

¹⁵⁷ *Canadian Freeman*, Aug. 30, 1866. See also, *Boston Pilot*, Sept. 8, 1866.

¹⁵⁸ *Army and Navy Gazette*, syndicated in *Irish Canadian*, 11 Oct., 1865.

Anglo-American relations during the war.¹⁵⁹ Considerable scandal had been caused in December 1863, when “either by the connivance of the crew or otherwise,” sixteen Cork natives were recruited directly into the US Navy, in direct contravention of the British Foreign Enlistment Act.¹⁶⁰ In fact, the US Navy had multiple contacts with Ireland during and after the Civil War.¹⁶¹ The Irish Executive was tangibly relieved when a subsequent visit of two warships of the US Navy early in 1865 had failed to “get up any serious display of feeling” amongst the Fenians of Cork. This lack of activity by the Brotherhood at this stage might partly be explained by the fact that Irish detectives had reported that the “American Officers made no secret of their contempt for the Fenians”, indicating that Fenianism had not permeated the US Navy to anywhere near the same extent as it existed in the Army.¹⁶²

The following spring rumours abounded of another American visit, but amidst a profoundly difficult political climate. Wodehouse immediately wrote to the Admiralty with a growing sense of panic that

A report has reached me that “The whole of the American squadron” will shortly come to Dublin Bay. I don’t know what their “whole squadron” may be, or whether the report is true, but if they should send a squadron by way of a demonstration, would it not be as well that some of our ships should be sent to counterbalance the effect of their presence?¹⁶³

Given the already significant deployment of ships to Irish waters, the Admiralty reminded Wodehouse that, “If, however, you want ships there, Admiral Fredrick has the disposal of our vessels now on the coast of Ireland.”¹⁶⁴ The planned visit was far from a full squadron, but resulted in a four-day visit to Belfast Lough of the USS *Canandaigua*, after which the US Consul in Belfast described the visit noting,

¹⁵⁹ Captain Winslow (USS *Kearsarge*) to Rear-Admiral Lewis Jones (Commander at Queenstown), n.d., Copy of enclosure in Rear-Admiral Lewis Jones to Admiralty, 7 Dec., 1863. NLI Larcom Papers, MS 7587. *Cork Examiner*, 3 Dec., 1863, *Express*, 23 Dec., 1863. *Irish Times*, 3 Mar., 1863.

¹⁶⁰ Marquis of Clanricarde. HL Deb., 18 Mar., 1864. Vol. 174, 295.

¹⁶¹ Gleeson, *The Green and the Gray*, 173; Joseph M. Hernon, *Celts, Catholics & Copperheads: Ireland Views the American Civil War* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1968), 30–31.

¹⁶² Wodehouse to Somerset, 25 Jul., 1865. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4029, 16-9.

¹⁶³ Wodehouse to Somerset, 7 Mar., 1866. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4043, 125.

¹⁶⁴ Somerset to Wodehouse, 8 Mar., 1866. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4043, 129-30.

“our ship of war was received with most marked and unmistakable tokens of esteem for which we owe the people of Belfast not a little gratitude.”¹⁶⁵

By the start of 1866 the invasion scares had broadened to include trepidation at the possibility of Fenian privateering. In the context of Confederate commerce raiding based out of British ports that led to the Alabama Claims, the idea of Fenians opening up a new front on the British was particularly worrying. The fear emerged on foot of reports of Irish harbour pilots travelling to the US to aid Fenian vessels operating with intimate knowledge of “every nook and cranny of the Irish coast”.¹⁶⁶ The interim Prime Minister, Lord Russell, was similarly warned that “that a pilot or pilots had gone to the United States to bring over the filibustering expedition.”¹⁶⁷ Conflicting reports emerged, however, when the *Cork Herald* reported that it was “generally believed amongst his [the informant’s] friends at this port that he is to pilot one of the Fenian gunboats, whose power, it is said, will be directed against British commerce.”¹⁶⁸ Fenians boasted in Philadelphia that they were “manning out ten or twelve ironclads and with them [aiming to] intercept English commerce.”¹⁶⁹ This claim was reported by Elon Tupper, an undercover Canadian Frontier Police agent in a circle of Fenians in Philadelphia, who reported to his Chief, Gilbert McMicken in Windsor, Ontario. Not only would this plan be a threat to British commerce, but also would have had the added bonus of diluting the RN presence in the north Atlantic, thereby facilitating a later filibustering expedition.

This process was consistent with reports of Fenian plans on the Great Lakes, with intelligence emerging about the fitting out of two Fenian privateers in Chicago to operate on Lake Michigan.¹⁷⁰ The Canadian detectives assigned to observe the vessels noted that, along with the estimated 500 stand of rifles on board, the *Dickinson* and the *Myrtle* (the former 247 Tons and the latter 207 Tons)

¹⁶⁵ John Young (Belfast Consulate) to Sec. of State William Seward, 28 Mar., 1866. NARA, Records of the Department of State, Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Belfast, Ireland, 1796-1906. T 368.

¹⁶⁶ *Cork Herald*, syndicated in *Irish Canadian*, Jan. 10, 1866.

¹⁶⁷ Wodehouse to Russell, 10 Dec. 1865. TNA, Russell Papers, 30/22/15H, 51-2.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ Tupper to McMicken, 4 Nov., 1865. Library Archives Canada (LAC), MacDonald Papers, MA26-A, Vol 236, Reel C1662, pp 102957.

¹⁷⁰ Tupper to McMicken, 21 Apr., 1866. LAC, John A Macdonald Papers, Vol 237 pp 103601.

had been refurbished and were awaiting action. The agent went on to state that “There is no doubt but that... [they] are really intended to be used as Fenian Privateers” once the navigation of the lakes reopened in the spring thaw.

McMicken urged John A Macdonald that “it would be well to have a steamer on the upper lakes in a quiet way for a few weeks.” This response echoed Wodehouse’s request to the Admiralty with three gunboats eventually dispatched to the lakes. It should be noted, however, that when the Fenian invasion of the Niagara peninsula eventually did take place it was the previously Fenian-infiltrated *USS Michigan*, rather than the Canadian volunteer vessel *Robb* or the Royal Navy gunboats, that was the prime mover in the ‘mop up’ operation that stopped immediate reinforcement and subsequently captured the retreating Fenian barges as they recrossed the Niagara River at Buffalo.¹⁷¹

Implementation 1865-68

These invasion scares resulted in a considerable reaction from the Admiralty who deployed a growing number of vessels to Irish waters to implement a wide range of naval counterinsurgency functions. This section will outline the challenges faced by the RN and the means utilized to attempt to overcome those difficulties. By considering the RN’s activities through the lenses Zaforteza has proposed (see page 248), it argues that the general policy of the Admiralty and Executive shifted from broad-stroke deterrence to specific deployments to address actionable intelligence. This process concluded in the post-rising period with a normalization of relations between the Admiralty and Ireland. The deployment was initially based on a mix between large warships and smaller vessels but developed into a more constabularized form as the period continued. From late spring 1867 the deployment was more dependent on smaller gunboats to secure the coast. In naval terms it shifted its focus from ‘Blue-Water’ to ‘Brown-Water’ functions.

The first function identified by Zaforteza in a navy’s role in the suppression of an internal insurrection is the provision of “logistical support”. This overall description embraces the functions of facilitating communications, supply of

¹⁷¹ Peter Vronsky, *Ridgeway*, (Toronto, ON; Penguin Canada, 2011), 37-8, 173.

material of war, and strategic mobility (which in the case of Ireland encompasses primarily troop transportation for the army and Royal Marines).¹⁷² As such, the RN's troop transportation is a perfect example of the use of power that is so ubiquitous as to become invisible from its "over-obtrusive presence".¹⁷³ As with all things ubiquitous, however, its centrality became most obvious when it was withdrawn, or when its provision was uncertain. Early in the strategic planning process, Rose was quick to complain that "I cannot draw up a memorandum on the subject of the defence of the coasts of this country without knowing how many vessels of war, steam or otherwise, are stationed on the Irish coasts."¹⁷⁴ It shall be demonstrated here that the RN's role in the strategic planning extended far beyond its distribution. Issues surrounding strategic mobility had come under scrutiny in light of the practices during the Crimean War as demonstrated through the consideration of "organized sea transport" during the deliberations of the Army Transport Committee.¹⁷⁵ The substantial commitment of both finance and manpower involved in troop transport was also topical given the establishment in 1866 of the Indian Trooping Service. Both of these instances meant that the provision of troop transport beyond the standard troop rotations was a particular topical issue for the Admiralty and the War Office.¹⁷⁶

The RN's provision of a troop-transportation service had a profound impact on the Executive's strategic decision-making process. The distribution of troops in Ireland was politically sensitive, with the dispatch of additional troops often being perceived as likely to escalate, rather than diminish, panic amongst elements of Irish society. Thus the rapidity with which troops could be transported to Ireland from Britain was central to all strategic decisions taken by the Irish Executive. In November 1866 this provision became uncertain for the first time in the 15-month period since the RN's expanded its counterinsurgency role. A planning meeting between the different branches of the security forces that included representatives of the Executive, the army, and the navy had been assured by the First Lord of the

¹⁷² Carlos Alfaro Zaforteza, "Navies, Internal Order and State-building in the Nineteenth Century", Institute for Historical Research, 25 October 2010.

¹⁷³ Eagleton, *op cit.*

¹⁷⁴ Quoted in Leon Ó Broin, *Fenian Fever*, 38.

¹⁷⁵ E. Lugard to Rose, 17 Mar., 1866. . BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,822, 60.

¹⁷⁶ Ian Stranack, *The Andrew and the Onions* (Bermuda: Island Press, 1979), 95.

Admiralty that he could “provide transport for 5,000 men to be ready at a moment’s notice”, a position reinforced by the longstanding Commander-in-Chief of the Army, the Duke of Cambridge, who added that “we can send 10,000 men into Ireland within 24 hours notice.”¹⁷⁷ However, this calmed the minds of the Irish Executive for less than a day, because later that evening the Admiralty wrote again to Chief Secretary Naas to revise downwards its capabilities. At that time only one regular troop ship was available, resulting in a situation where the Admiralty could not “undertake to send more than 1,500 men to Ireland at short notice.”¹⁷⁸ Naas’ frustration at this Admiralty failure quickly emerged when he complained to Lord Lieutenant Abercorn that, “we must know what number of men can be transported to Ireland at a moment’s notice as our demand for troops must be regulated by that.” Thus the specific ability of the Executive to plan for the defence of Ireland was entirely predicated upon the previously unquestioned ability of the Admiralty to speedily facilitate any large troop transportation deemed necessary by Naas in collaboration with Rose.

One aspect of the RN’s role in the provision of strategic mobility was in its regular use in providing transport for elements of the civil power when it engaged in boarding transatlantic vessels to facilitate searches and seizures. Based upon numerous reports forwarded from the Home and Foreign Offices, often originating from the network of British Consuls on the American east coast, detachments of Irish Constabulary officers accompanied by Magistrates intercepted vessels before landfall could be made. Acting on requests from the Lord Lieutenant, Admiral Frederick in Queenstown wrote to the Admiralty to request that he could put in place measures that

might be taken in concert with the Civil Authorities of this country to intercept these vessels before they could have any communication with the shore, and search for arms or any treasonable correspondence these Fenians might have about them or in their baggage.¹⁷⁹

Inbound vessels from America were generally intercepted off Crookhaven, on Ireland’s most south-westerly point and often the first potential landfall for inbound steam packets. Naval officers were issued with instructions “to act

¹⁷⁷ Naas to Abercorn, 22 Nov., 1866. Abercorn Papers, PRONI. D623/a/304/3.

¹⁷⁸ Admiralty to Naas, 22 Nov., 1866, Abercorn Papers, PRONI, T2541/vr/85/1.

¹⁷⁹ Adm Frederick to Secretary of the Admiralty, 1 Oct., 1865. TNA, ADM/5920, L 461.

cordially with the Civil Authorities and to concert with them such measures as may be deemed best to carry out the wishes of His Excellency.”¹⁸⁰ On the east coast, a classic example can be seen in widespread reports of the Liverpool steam-tug *Slasher* being boarded by the Irish Constabulary, “under the impression that she had some Fenian stores on board”, and being detained until the authorities verified her “true character.”¹⁸¹ It might be noted that this idea of policing the high seas was a key component in the RN’s attempts to eradicate the slave trade throughout the period in question.¹⁸²

The navy controlled outward as well as inward shipping, as seen in the aftermath of the escape of Stephens on the night of 23-24 November 1865. Most notable in this regard, is the way in which the ships around the coast could quickly be re-tasked from patrol to inspection functions, and from intercepting outward rather than incoming vessels. Admiral Frederick received word of Stephen’s escape at 11:45 am on 25 November. By 11 am the next morning the *Liverpool* with a party of Constabulary on board had left with orders to “proceed off Cape Clear for the purpose of intercepting the packet at that point and to place the Constabulary on board to search for Stephens.”¹⁸³ By 4:40pm the Ironclad *Achilles* was dispatched to perform a similar function outside Cork Harbour, and was joined on the 26th by the *Hyaena* to intercept any packet appearing off Castletownsend.¹⁸⁴

The Admiralty’s reaction to the escape was not limited to Ireland, however. Enlisting the aid of the local Coast Guard, Captain Paynter of the HMS *Donegal* at Rock Ferry near Birkenhead, issued orders that the Guardsmen and crew of the tender *Goshawk* were to “board vessels of that description [per the description forwarded by telegram] if they suspected Stephens was on board”.¹⁸⁵ The *Goshawk* was ordered to remain at the mouth of the river Mersey to board any suspected vessels, but Paynter did “not anticipate that he [Stephens] will attempt to come to

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ *Dublin Express*, syndicated in the *Canadian Freeman*, 2 Nov., 1865. *The Nation*, Oct., 14, 1865.

¹⁸² Andrew Lambert, ‘Slavery, Free Trade and Naval Strategy, 1840-1860’, in *Slavery, Diplomacy and Empire. Britain and the Suppression of the Slave Trade, 1807-1975*, ed. Keith Hamilton and Patrick Salmon (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2009), 65–80.

¹⁸³ Frederick to Secretary of the Admiralty, 26 Nov., 1865. TNA, ADM 1/5920.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Captain Paynter to Secretary of the Admiralty, (n.d.) TNA, HO 45/7799 (327).

this port as the Police are on the lookout.”¹⁸⁶ Drawing a wider conclusion from the opinion expressed by Paynter, it could be argued that the speed and scale of RN action may, in part, explain why Stephens decided to go to ground rather than risk immediate departure from Ireland or Liverpool.¹⁸⁷

The RN also undertook more mundane, but necessary functions. Given the limited telegraph infrastructure (discussed below in the Coastguard chapter), RN vessels were often required to convey sensitive intelligence from other branches of state power to both the Irish Executive and the Admiralty.¹⁸⁸ As in the 1840s, the RN were used to transport arms and ammunition, particularly the removal of weapons from isolated and undermanned barracks.¹⁸⁹ Perhaps the most important strategic mobility function performed upon the immediate outbreak of the rising was in maintaining communications between the Cork and Dublin Division of the army. Admiral Frederick wrote to Naas to inform him that, “[...] in consequence of the trains being unable to proceed to Dublin [due to Fenian sabotage], I despatched HM Ship *Helicon* with the mail bags from Cork. She will also take the Despatches of Major General Bates (Commander of the Cork Division) for Lord Strathnairn (General Rose).”¹⁹⁰ Without such an efficient and reliable means of communication between the two main military districts, army measures to coordinate their response to the rising would have been far more problematic.

Isolation of the Insurgency

The second naval counterinsurgency function identified by Zaforteza is the need to isolate any insurgency. It is this element that dominated both the archival record and the RN’s eventual actions in Ireland though the imposition and gradual expansion of a naval cordon around the southern and western coast. The deployment of the RN in Irish waters to deal with the Fenian threat proceed in

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ For more on the escape itself see Marta Ramon, *A Provisional Dictator – James Stephens and the Fenian Movement* (Dublin: UCD Press, 2007), 185-190.

¹⁸⁸ Captain Aplin (HMS *Gladiator*) to Rear-Admiral Frederick, 22 Sept., 1865. Enclosure in Adm Frederick’s report of 26 Sept., 1865. TNA, ADM/5920, L335. For examples from the 1840s see, Devitt, ‘The “Navalization” of Ireland. The Royal Navy and Irish Insurrection in the 1840s’, 402.

¹⁸⁹ Frederick to Naas, 11 Mar. 1867. NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 1732, 4050.

¹⁹⁰ Frederick to Naas, 6 Mar., 1867. NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 1732, 4237.

three phases: initial deployment (September- December 1865); a period of expansion (up to Autumn 1866); and a period of increased activity to deal with the rising and its aftermath (February-April 1867). The central role of the RN is obvious from the speed with which the Lord Lieutenant called on the Admiralty for help. Even Rose acknowledged the importance of the Navy to Irish security saying that "If an idea exists amongst Irish-American Fenians of a filibustering descent on the Irish coasts, nothing is so likely to prevent it, as the knowledge that there are ships of war in strategical [sic] stations in the Irish harbours, or landing places."¹⁹¹

That the opening phase came to be viewed primarily as a deterrent is clearly demonstrated by the rapid change in the RN's use on the coast. This change was observable from the first days of the deployment, and one that involved not only the number of ships, but also their usage. Wodehouse had originally suggested "that it would be a protection to the Coast and make a fond impression in the south of Ireland if two or three gunboats or other small armed vessels were placed at the disposal of the Admiral commanding on the Cork Station, and visited from time to time the various harbours on the south and south-west Coast."¹⁹² In light, however, of Somerset's opinion (expressed more fully in the introduction, above) that undertaking "vigorous measures" were preferable, a larger commitment of naval force was deemed necessary by the Admiralty.¹⁹³ The Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty (LCA) initially envisioned the deployment as an unobtrusive operation, explaining to Frederick that they "do not wish to attract attention to the proceedings of the ships on the Irish Coast".¹⁹⁴ It soon became clear, however, that the need to "attract attention" to their presence was exactly what was required. To achieve this Somerset suggested that he would use the Channel Squadron and "privately direct Admiral Dacres to look in at Bantry bay and Cork accordingly as he may find it convenient."¹⁹⁵ The early *ad hoc* arrival of the Channel Squadron which was later formalized is entirely consistent with the approaches observed during both the Repeal and Young Ireland crises.

¹⁹¹ Rose to Wodehouse, Dec. 13, 1865. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4038, 4-9.

¹⁹² Wodehouse to Somerset, 1 Sept., 1865. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4031, 8-10.

¹⁹³ Somerset to Wodehouse, 2 Sept., 1865. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4031, 14-15.

¹⁹⁴ Admiralty to Frederick, 6 Sept., 1865. TNA, ADM 1/6574.

¹⁹⁵ Somerset to Wodehouse, 4 Sept., 1865. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4031, 27-8.

Following Somerset's 'private' request, it was decided that the Channel Squadron, under the command of Admiral Dacres, should undertake to visit Irish ports, initially focusing on Cork. This sizable fleet consisted of seven large Ironclad vessels and one additional gunboat, a total of more than 240 guns, and proved a considerable deterrent.¹⁹⁶ While there may have been some reluctance on the part of the Admiralty to formalize this deployment, there seems to have been excitement among the naval officers who, Somerset noted, would "be disappointed if they do not catch some vessel full of Fenians or of arms or of something treasonable as they find Irish Harbours rather dull."¹⁹⁷ Writing to the Duke of Somerset on the success of these measures, Wodehouse commented that "from all I hear nothing has disconcerted the Fenians as much as the timely appearance of our ships on the coast."¹⁹⁸ The intended deterrent nature of the operation was highlighted, however, through Wodehouse's admission to Somerset that "I fear the naval officers will be disappointed in their desire to catch a Fenian, but they are, notwithstanding, rendering a valuable service," thus tacitly confirming that the very presence of the RN made it dramatically less likely that any large scale landing could be attempted.¹⁹⁹

Beyond the initial visit, the vessels of the Channel Squadron were broken up and integrated into the sparser coastal deployment with designated patrol areas. The minutiae were communicated to Wodehouse by Admiral Frederick in a commitment of ships and men well above that initially indicated by Somerset, with six additional vessels specifically dedicated to the south and southwest Irish coast. The basic premise was that, weather depending, vessels would undertake frequent patrols, and when not on patrol, their presence at station in harbours would prove a deterrent in itself. As illustrated below, the steam frigate *Gladiator* (1210 tons, 6 Gun, 205 crew, including 25 marines) would patrol predominately along the southern coast, while the steam frigate *Liverpool* (2656 tons, 39 guns, 505 crew, including 70 marines) of the Channel Squadron would remain at station in Queenstown ready to "act on any definitive information I [Frederick] may

¹⁹⁶ Admiralty Report: "Ships in Commission – October 1865", Royal Navy Museum, Portsmouth, 9-10.

¹⁹⁷ Somerset to Wodehouse, 25 Oct., 1865. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4035, 7-8.

¹⁹⁸ Wodehouse to Somerset, 20 Oct., 1865. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C. 4032, 124-6.

¹⁹⁹ Wodehouse to Somerset, 29 Oct., 1865. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4035, 55-6.

receive”.²⁰⁰ The gunboats *Blazer*, *Hyena* and *Sandfly* were assigned patrol areas (See Map 5.4), but despite their small size relative to any of the larger RN vessels, any one of the ‘gunboat class’ vessels were more than a match of any unarmed or lightly armed steamer the American Fenians might send to the Irish coast being “about 100 feet long, with 22 feet beam, and a draft at load-line of 6.5 feet. Each was armed with one deck-gun, a 68-pounder, which, by turning on a pivot, could be used either ahead, astern, or in any other direction.”²⁰¹ Combining this with the vessel already stationed in Queenstown, the *Hastings* (1760 tons, 50 guns, 84 crew), and we discover that the commitment of force in September 1865 was already quite considerable. Wodehouse’s belief that “it is very desirable to calm the minds of the timid, and the appearance of ships along the coast ought to have that effect as it shows that we omit no precautions,” seems to be borne out here.²⁰² Not only was it important to do something, but also to be *seen* to be doing something.

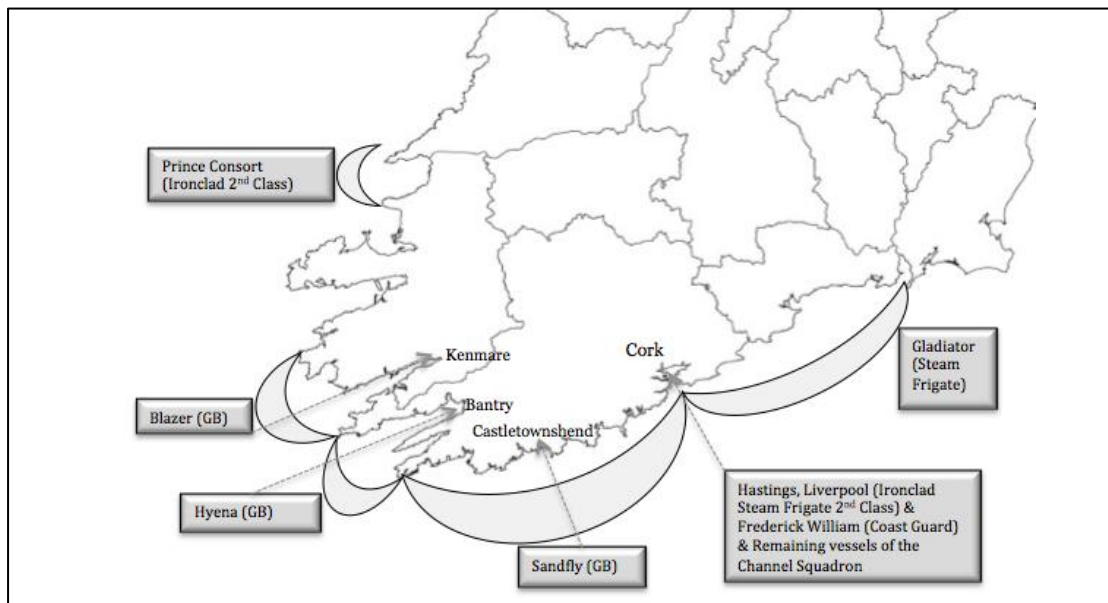
An assessment of Map 5.4 might be interpreted as demonstrating both higher levels of anxiety and higher levels of potential Fenian activity. It is noteworthy that Skibbereen, home of the original Phoenix Society is flanked by two gunboats at Castletownshend and Bantry at exactly the same time as approximately a hundred soldiers were despatched there in October 1865. This map demonstrates that even at an early stage a comprehensive, hermetically sealed cordon was not even attempted, due to the profusion of possible landing spots for a filibustering expedition, but also that the naval deterrence goals that the Executive and Admiralty hoped to achieve were not required to achieve an optimal outcome.

²⁰⁰ Adm Frederick to Wodehouse, 9 Sept., 1865. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4031, 54-5.

²⁰¹ From <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/systems/ship/pg.htm>, Accessed 10 Aug., 2013.

²⁰² Wodehouse to Somerset, 11 Sept., 1865. Bodl., Kim. MS. Eng C, 4031, 80-2.

Map 5.4. Naval Patrols on Southern and South-Western Coast, October 1865



Source: Admiral Frederick to Wodehouse, 9 Sept. 1865. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C, 4031, 54-5 ²⁰³

Attorney General Lawson, perhaps over-hasty in his panic, admitted that the Channel fleet provided a “very good protection for Cork and its neighbourhood”, but he was certain that the cordon needed to be expanded. “We want a sufficient naval force”, he continued “distributed around our coast, so as to render a landing impracticable.”²⁰⁴ Having come under pressure from numerous landlords, Wodehouse also “strongly pressed” to have the cordon expanded to include Galway, the Shannon, and Waterford on a semi-permanent basis. Explaining the need for further reinforcement he had written to Somerset in September 1865 to argue that

It would be most unfortunate if any attempt were made to land at or near the ports above mentioned, and no protection had been afforded by the Government. At the wish therefore of seeming insatiable, I submit to you whether it might be prudent to place two or three more vessels at Admiral Frederick’s disposal so that he may be able to watch the coast as far as Galway.²⁰⁵

The implication here seems to be that, should a landing actually take place, Wodehouse would have been able to transfer the blame from the Executive to the Admiralty, giving him adequate political cover. Again seeking to transfer a degree

²⁰³ The *Frederick William* is not included in this initial report due to its classification as a Coast Guard ship, but would later be considered as part of the cordon.

²⁰⁴ Lawson to Wodehouse, 13 Oct., 1865. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4034, 78-9.

²⁰⁵ Wodehouse to Somerset, 11 Sept., 1865. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4031, 80-2.

of responsibility, he subsequently informed Somerset that one of the motivations behind his requests was conversely that “there is a tendency to unreasoning panic amongst the upper and middle classes which it is very desirable to check.”²⁰⁶ This illustrates the degree to which the Lord Lieutenant was obliged to pander to his primary constituents, the landed gentry.

Showing himself an astute political mind, Somerset was quick to retort that Wodehouse should not “expect from the Navy the internal defence of the country.”²⁰⁷ He also warned him of the limitations facing the navy, namely the impossibility of providing a hermetically sealed cordon around the Irish coast with its numerous possible landing points. He clearly understood and communicated the idea that the loyal could be mollified and the disloyal deterred by the Navy when he noted that their action “will give confidence to those who may be alarmed and... may prevent some foolish attempt being made by the idiots - the Fenians,” but warned that “if a serious attempt were made of landing a force by fast steamers, the squadron could not certainly prevent such a scheme.” Thus he left the ball firmly in the Executive’s court, particularly because the technological limitations of the gunboats meant that they “have not steam power sufficient if the weather should be stormy, to remain on the coast without risk.”²⁰⁸

It is interesting to note that the American Fenians were all too aware of the problems associated with implementing a full cordon around the Irish coast. E.M. Archibald, British Consul in New York, wrote to Earl Russell in the Foreign Office in September 1865, commenting on an informer’s report of a recent Fenian meeting at which “the difficulty of preventing blockade runners entering Wilmington, notwithstanding the presence of a squadron of twenty vessels of War, was referred to, as significant of the facility with which vessels laden with arms could be run into Irish ports.”²⁰⁹ This indicates not only that this circle was aware of the developments on the Irish coast, but also that for a deterrence policy to have full effect it needed a far greater allocation of resources. It further demonstrates how

²⁰⁶ Wodehouse to Somerset, 14 Sept., 1865. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C, 4031, 142.

²⁰⁷ Somerset to Wodehouse, 13 Sept., 1865. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C, 4031, 134-5.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Archibald to Russell, 16 Sept. 1865. TNA, HO 45/7799, 163-169.

the Fenian exposure to the US Navy's "Anaconda Plan" had informed their own understanding of the possibilities and limitations of Ireland's naval defence. In fact, the impact of these actions were felt as far afield as Toronto, with the loyalist newspaper reassured as to the failure of any filibustering expedition, which they felt sure would be impossible because, "as it will have to encounter the English fleet, it will only go to destruction."²¹⁰

Presence vs patrolling

A qualitative assessment of the effectiveness of the deterrent action rests on two contrasting uses of the vessels in Irish waters, namely whether they were more effective when patrolling the coast, or whether their presence in ports was more likely to produce a deterrent effect. What emerges in the early stage of the deployment is that a substantial exertion of effort was effective only in regards to specific threats, whereas during relatively quieter periods, the presence in the local harbour towns was deemed sufficient. To prove this assertion a number of very brief case studies will be employed.

The first of these specific cases is the patrolling role played by HMS *Gladiator* and HMS *Sandfly* in September 1865, in an attempt to gather useful intelligence of Fenian night drilling on the coast of Cork. Between the 18 and 26 September, Captain Aplin expended considerable effort visiting Ballinskelligs Bay, Crookhaven, Valentia, Berehaven, and Glengariff.²¹¹ Despite consulting with local coastguards and magistrates he concluded that, "It does not appear any drilling had taken place."²¹² Similarly Lieutenant Visconti in *Sandfly* cruised in the areas of Dursey, Mizen and Sheep Heads, and anchored in Bantry Harbour, Berehaven, and Glengariff. The sum total of this patrolling effort was the admission by Aplin that "With respect to the service on which I am employed after making every inquiry possible, I have not been able to obtain any information of any importance."²¹³ It must be noted that there are two possible competing interpretations of this action. First, it might be proposed that patrolling and intelligence gathering can be seen as

²¹⁰ *The Leader* (Toronto), 6 Mar., 1866.

²¹¹ Ships Log for HMS *Gladiator*, Sept. 1865, TNA, ADM 53/9095.

²¹² Captain Aplin to Frederick, 26 Sept. 1865. TNA, ADM 1/5920.

²¹³ *Ibid.*

inefficient uses of the RN at this juncture. Second, however, it could be argued that the very presence of the ships along the coast was sufficient to deter the Fenians from night drilling in coastal areas. Of these two options the latter seems more probable, but cannot be definitively attributed to naval actions alone.

A further observation on this initial period would be to note that even in December 1865 a large proportion of the Channel Fleet remained in Irish waters, which reinforces the view that at this stage the “Blue Water” fleet continued with “Brown Water” functions. By mid-December 1865 integrated into the previously outlined positions (above) were:

The *Defence* at Lough Swilly
The *Prince Consort* (plus a gunboat tender) at Tarbert
The *Achilles* at Berehaven (with an additional gunboat)
An additional gunboat at Youghal
And one gunboat at Waterford.
Black Prince, Hector, Liverpool and one gunboat (for harbour service) remaining at Queenstown. ...[and] if the *Gladiator* should be sent back to this station [Ireland] I would send her to Crookhaven and remove the gunboat now there to Castletownsend.²¹⁴

This description indicates that the initial four-months deployment had shifted from “patrolling” to “harbour presence”, although much of this shift might be accounted for by the difficulties that the Ironclad vessels tended to experience in rough sea conditions, and which were “not desirable to send out at this season of the year, unless an emergency.”²¹⁵ This deployment remained relatively constant until the end of April 1866 at which point the larger ships of the Channel Squadron were recalled upon the proviso that “when the Channel squadron is assembled for its usual evolutions, it will be ordered to visit Irish ports.”²¹⁶

Beyond the trends identified, neither the Admiralty nor the Executive produced documentation that we might now recognize as an overarching defensive strategy on the most appropriate use of the ships in Irish waters. Here, the process must be ‘reverse engineered’ as Andrew Lambert has suggested.²¹⁷ It must also be noted that in terms of the mapping of naval counterinsurgency, these

²¹⁴ Frederick to Wodehouse, 16 Dec., 1865. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4038, 99-100.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Wodehouse to Somerset, 22 Apr., 1866. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4046, 19-21.

²¹⁷ Lambert, “The Royal Navy and the Defence of Empire”, in Kennedy, *Imperial Defence*, 118.

are merely snapshots of the RN's activity in Ireland and they may have a tendency to distort the real scale of RN action. A more detailed examination of the Ships' Logs provides far greater insight into the disparity between "presence" and "patrolling" functions of the RN ships, with four specific examples illustrating the different functions. The Coastguard vessel *Frederick William*, for example, remained exclusively in port (first at Queenstown from June 1865 to December 1866, and then to Foynes until January 1868) consistent with its Coastguard functions.²¹⁸ The second example, HMS *Liverpool*, (described above as assigned "to act on any definite information which I [Frederick] may receive") remained in Queenstown from September 1865 to January 1866, with the exception of one trip to Lough Swilly in early November and another brief cruise in search of James Stephens (see below).²¹⁹ However, both HMS *Gladiator* and HMS *Prince Consort* spent considerably more time at sea and in visiting isolated harbours. Between September 1865 and May 1866 *Gladiator* visited 17 separate locations within Ireland, while also returning to English ports on 5 separate occasions.²²⁰ In the same period, *Prince Consort* changed locations 12 times, predominantly focussed around its assigned patrol area of North Kerry.²²¹ It is noteworthy that the *Prince Consort*, one of the largest ships (and an Ironclad) was widely used in different locations, which indicates the desire that this class of ship was perceived as having most to offer in this kind of function, and is consistent with the 1863 Channel Fleet logic of ensuring the local population became more familiar with the naval advances on display.

Consolidation – Autumn & Winter 1866

The composition of the cordon along the Irish coast varied depending on numerous factors; these included the necessity to pay off ships (as their crews' period of service expired); technical/engineering difficulties; a necessity to participate in home fleet-training exercises; and even accidents, such as the

²¹⁸ HMS *Frederick William*, Ship's Log, TNA, ADM 53/9165-6.

²¹⁹ HMS *Liverpool*, Ship's Log, TNA, ADM 53/8874-6.

²²⁰ HMS *Gladiator*, Ship's Log, TNA, ADM 53/9095.

²²¹ HMS *Prince Consort*, Ship's Log, TNA, ADM53 8965-6.

running aground of the *Hyaena* near Killala in the wintry conditions of January 1866.²²²

Increased fear of invasion at the end of 1866 saw additional deployments to the Irish coast. The LCA informed Admiral Frederick of these provisions, commenting that not only was the *Liverpool* (39 Guns, 3720 Tons) returning to Queenstown, but also that this was to be supplemented with numerous gunboats. The Admiralty explained that, “The *Goldfinch* (Tender to *Lion*), the *Nightingale* (Tender to *Royal George*), and the *Blazer* (Tender to *Frederick William*) have also been ordered to be placed at your disposal for Special Service in Ireland. The *Goldfinch* has been ordered to Belfast and the *Nightingale* will be at Kingstown to await your orders,” and that the *Vixen* would shortly be sent to Queenstown.²²³ By the end of the month the *Whiting* would similarly be despatched to Blacksod Bay.²²⁴ That eight additional ships were to be despatched to the Irish coast indicates the seriousness with which the Admiralty viewed the Fenian invasion threat, but also that at this stage we are beginning to see an increasing reliance on gunboats and the gradual integration of Coastguard vessels into the RN cordon. This underlines the danger of taking a homogenous view of RN vessels, given the sheer number of ships in Irish waters and the types of ships and their relative capabilities.

Notwithstanding these additional ships, there still existed a perception that the coast remained vulnerable. Inspector General Boilean of the Coastguard wrote to Frederick to point out that “upwards of 40 miles of coast between Lackeen Point and Waterville Detachment [is] left totally unguarded” and that the only solution to such a situation would be “a gunboat or cutter” to be stationed at Sneem “during such times as apprehension of landing arms may be expected.”²²⁵ Similarly, JR Grovner noted that he “must earnestly caution the Government to attend, even if [it] be too late, to Her Majesty’s ships in the port, as well as to Spike Island, Rocky, and Haulbowline, all of which are considered by the disaffected, to be the same as

²²² *Irish Times*, 26 Jan. 1866. NLI, Larcom papers. MS 7677.

²²³ Admiralty to Frederick, 13 Nov., 1866. TNA, ADM 1/6574.

²²⁴ Lennox (Secretary of the Admiralty) to Frederick. 26 Nov. 1866. TNA, ADM 1/6574.

²²⁵ Boileann to Frederick, 22 Nov., 1866. TNA, ADM 1/6574.

unprotected.”²²⁶ So strong was Grovner’s intelligence that he warned, “my fears are not imaginary, neither are they grounded on any idle report. Do not trifle with this hint.”²²⁷

The increased dependency on gunboats brought with it additional benefits but possible challenges. Writing to refuse a request for an additional constabulary detachment, Naas concluded that he thought, “[...] you underrate altogether the services of the gunboat, for I believe in case of an emergency you would find one of the vessels a most efficient auxiliary in the protection of property and the preservation of peace.”²²⁸ Admiral Frederick, however, issued a “General Memo” to all the ships on the Irish station in December 1866 in which he warned of the risks to small isolated vessels. Like the risks posed to small army and Royal Marines detachments, he pointed out the “immediate necessity for caution to be used that the Gunboats and small vessels may not be seized by a rush of men or number of armed boats.”²²⁹ Frederick ordered that vessels stationed at piers, or close to harbours “should avoid placing their ships in a portion commanded [overlooked] by Houses or other parts of the shore”, and that officers and men should not “as a rule, be landed on service from any ships or vessels without the written requisition of the local magistrates.”²³⁰ This possibility of unanticipated shore duty, if unregulated, was particularly likely, given that the police and civil authorities had informed the Lieutenant in command of the *Griper* of Fenian plans to attack local barracks with fire in order to draw their occupants into the open.²³¹ With this in mind Frederick was forced to “direct that parties are not to be landed to assist in extinguishing fires on shore; the only exception being in the event of any fire occurring at Haulbowline.”²³² These simple yet sensible precautions demonstrate that Frederick was all too aware of the implicit challenges faced by the RN in the difficult naval counterinsurgency functions it was required to perform.

²²⁶ JR Grovner to Frederick, 25 Nov., 1866. TNA, ADM 1/6574.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Naas to Augustus Kennedy, 7 Dec., 1866. NLI, Mayo Papers, MS 43,884/4.

²²⁹ Admiral Frederick, General Memo, 1 Dec., 1866. TNA, ADM 1/6574.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Lieutenant in Command of HMS *Griper* to Frederick, 30 Nov., 1866. TNA, ADM 1/6574.

²³² Admiral Frederick, General Memo, 1 Dec., 1866. TNA, ADM 1/6574.

Reacting to the Rising – February - March 1867

If we consider the specific actions of the Fenians as beginning with the Chester raid on 11 February 1867 and lasting until the end of the attempted March Rising, then we can see that the RN's role became crucially important. The RN's response was characterized by speed, scale, and success, and it remained focussed upon its primary responsibility of isolating the insurgency. The gunboats that patrolled the coast were quickly brought to bear on the coastal towns, such as at Tralee roadstead.²³³ There was also a spike in requests from coastal towns for naval support, such as that from the inhabitants of Carlingford who sent a memorial "submitting the necessity of sending a company of soldiers or a gunboat for their protection."²³⁴ Similar requests were received by Dublin Castle for naval support from as far afield as Blacksod and Broadhaven bay (Co. Mayo), Tralee, Donegal Bay, the mouth of the Shannon, and Killarney.²³⁵

Speed of both action and communication were central to the RN's success in this period. British authorities became aware of the impending Chester raid in the late afternoon of 10 February when the informant John Corydon alerted Liverpool's Head Constable who, though somewhat sceptical, forwarded the information to the relevant authorities.²³⁶ The plan had involved the intended transportation to Ireland of the haul of weapons from Chester Castle, and the naval consequences of this were immediately obvious to the Admiralty. By 12 February, Frederick had issued another General Memo warning that, "Information having been received that a large number of persons are expected to embark for Ireland, a vigilant look-out is to be kept."²³⁷ Ó Broin notes that it was the Dublin police who ultimately intercepted the coal vessel *New Draper* with its Fenian passengers arriving from Whitehaven, but to this it must be added that the formal state of alert

²³³ High Sherriff of Kerry to Naas, 21 Feb., 1867. NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 1731, 2796.

²³⁴ Magistrates and Inhabitants of Carlingford, Co. Louth to Abercorn, 9 Mar., 1867. NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 1732, 4025. See also, Lord Dunboyne to Larcom, 12 Mar., 1867. NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 1732, 4177.

²³⁵ Thomas Wood, Belmullet to Abercorn, 14, Dec., 1866 (forwarded to C/S 13 Mar, 1867) NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 1732, 4323. JPs of Donegal to Dublin Castle, 5 Apr., 1867. NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 1735, 6118.

²³⁶ Ó Broin, *Fenian Fever*, 127-8. Jenkins, *The Fenian Problem*, 81.

²³⁷ Frederick, General Memo, 12 Feb. 1867. TNA, ADM 1/6574.

meant that the subsequent action in Kerry took place during an already heightened sense of danger.²³⁸

The importance of the speed of communication and counter-action is highlighted by the fact that Crown Forces were already on the alert at the time of the cutting of the telegraph wires around Mallow and Valentia, before news of the failure of the Chester raid had filtered through to Kerry Fenians. Thus, the raid on an isolated Coastguard Station proceeded and elicited a similarly speedy response. Jenkins has noted that the local Fenians “prudently abandoned a planned attack on a police barracks on learning that the defenders had been reinforced by marines from one of the naval vessels patrolling the coast”, a situation for which the RN were more than prepared, but whose actions has remained un-interrogated by historians of Fenianism.²³⁹ The previous evening the Admiralty had already communicated their concerns to Frederick in cypher via telegraph as the LCA noted: “We find wires are cut between Mallow and Valentia. Send *Helicon* round, if *Gladiator* has left, and order *Liverpool* back to Bantry. *Vestal* [gunboat] is ordered to Bantry, and if not wanted is to go on to Valentia.”²⁴⁰ Given the volume of invasion scares discussed above, it is perhaps surprising that the RN was prepared to take such vigorous action to prevent the escalation of the situation in Ireland. Despite the quick suppression of activity, the RN maintained a vigilant watch on the whole coast, primarily by isolating the insurgency, with their main focus to “prevent the illegal landing of men or Arms on the Coast from Vessels which may come from any quarter in aid of the Insurgents,” rather than trying to project power ashore.²⁴¹ Interestingly, a gunboat was even ordered to the English port of Whitehaven (the earlier point of Fenian departure), and this was acceded to, whereas the application by the Chief Constable of Cumberland for the arming of his men was rejected.²⁴²

As with the 1848 rising, the fact that nearly all of action during the 1867 rising occurred inland seems to limit the significance of the RN’s role, beyond the

²³⁸ Ó Broin, *Fenian Fever*, 128.

²³⁹ Jenkins, *The Fenian Problem*, 82.

²⁴⁰ Admiralty to Frederick, 13 Feb. 1867. TNA, ADM 1/6574.

²⁴¹ Frederick, General Memo, 16 Feb. 1867. TNA, ADM 1/6574.

²⁴² Jenkins, *The Fenian Problem*, 82.

now frequent issuing of “General Memos” instructing all patrolling vessels to be on alert. This does not mean, however, that the RN did not have significant functions to perform. Where these memos differed from previous instructions was in the area of signalling. Resident Magistrates in Cork understood the important intelligence-gathering function of the RN and sought their aid in keeping watch on the lighting of fires on coastal mountain tops, for those were expected to act as a signal for the beginning of a more generalized uprising.²⁴³ There are two elements of note in this request. The first was the realization that the RN would be best suited to this function, but more importantly, the routing of that request. The request appears to have come to Admiral Frederick directly from the Resident Magistrates themselves, rather than being routed through the regular, official channel, where the Lord Lieutenant would request the Admiralty to intervene. It appears, therefore, that at a time of obvious insurrectionary threat, the Admiral commanding in Queenstown was in a position to act with a degree of independence, as the situation required it. Whether this was implicit to the position, or due to Frederick’s own background is debatable. Before his appointment to the position of Commander-in-Chief at Queenstown, Frederick had spent almost six years as a Commissioner of Admiralty (June 1859 to March 1865), serving as both 3rd and 4th Naval Lord. One might speculate that his intimate knowledge of the inner workings of the Admiralty administration made him the perfect choice for this command as he was aware of how to circumvent the formal limits of his office to meet pressing exigencies.²⁴⁴

²⁴³ Frederick, General Memo, 3 Mar. 1867. TNA, ADM 1/6574.

²⁴⁴ I am grateful to Prof. Andrew Lambert for this observation on the suitability of Frederick to the Queenstown command at a time of heightened invasion concern, and of his understanding of the inner-workings of the Admiralty itself.

Table 5.5. Disposition of HM Ships on the Coast of Ireland, 12 June 1867

Patrol area (headquarters)	Name of Ship	Class/Description
Kingstown Harbour	<i>Royal George</i>	District Coast Guard Ship
	<i>Raven</i>	Gunboat – Tender to <i>Royal George</i>
Queenstown	<i>Wivern</i>	Flag Ship
	<i>Sandfly</i>	Gunboat
Kinsale	<i>Highlander</i>	Gunboat
Kinsale to Mizen (Crookhaven)	<i>Rainbow</i>	Gunboat
Mizen to Dursey Island (Bantry)	<i>Research</i>	Ironclad
Dursey Island to Bowler’s Head (Kenmare)	<i>Griper</i>	Gunboat
Valentia (Later ordered to Killybegs)	<i>Helicon</i>	“Small two-funnel steamer”
River Shannon	<i>Frederick William</i>	District Coast Guard Ship
Loop Head to Slyne head (Galway)	<i>Hind</i>	Gunboat
Slyne Head to Erris Head	<i>Lark</i>	Gunboat
On Passage to Queenstown from Belmullet	<i>Sepoy</i>	Gunboat

Source: Adm Frederick to Larcom, 12 Jun., 1867. NLI, Larcom Papers, MS 7697

The evolving functions of the RN go far beyond the types of ships stationed in Ireland as the range of functions that it was now required to perform considerably widened. Captain Kennedy of the Coastguard ship *Frederick William*, stationed at the Shannon in July 1867, communicated to Frederick that he had instructed the gunboats in his district (at Roaring Water Bay and Galley Head) to keep a check on the areas where “the most likely place for an attempt [at landing weapons] might be made,” and that beyond this all vessels had directions “to frequently board and overhaul hookers and small fishing craft” which, it was imagined, would be the most likely means of bringing ashore any illegal arms shipments.²⁴⁵ It seems that the *Erin’s Hope* episode still weighed heavy on the Admiralty’s mind when a series of further alerts were issued in both September and October 1867 and, wary of the potential vulnerability of the telegraph system, these were communicated in cypher. The Lieutenant commanding the gunboat *Pigeon*, for example, was instructed to “communicate with the Coast Guard and Civil Authorities at the different ports the *Pigeon* may visit, and act in concert with

²⁴⁵ Captain Kennedy (HMS *Frederick William*), 6 Jul. 1867. TNA, ADM 1/6574.

them for preserving the peace if called on to do so.”²⁴⁶ It is evident, therefore, that as the military fallout of the failed rising subsided, the RN in Ireland reverted to a more constabularized role that relied far more heavily on coordination with civil powers, which was to be undertaken by smaller gunboats and Coast Guard vessels. This represented a new *de facto* “Brown Water” force on the coast of Ireland.

The withdrawal of the majority of Admiralty vessels in early 1868 signalled a return to the pre-Fenian status quo, with a few exceptions, and to the distress of some.²⁴⁷ One Waterford JP, for example, suggested the permanent security benefits to the city if, “a ship of war moored in the river for the due protection of that city with some Marine artillery with field guns and a detachment of Marine Light Infantry on board.”²⁴⁸ To maintain the long-cultivated impression of naval presence, the Channel Squadron returned to Belfast Lough that September. This time, however, the squadron’s new commander, Admiral Warden, avoided the political snub inflicted by Dacres and availed of the hospitality of the Belfast elite, in much the same manner as had happened in Dublin six years previously.²⁴⁹ Unlike in previous visits, however, security considerations were at a premium. This was exposed by an Irish sailor who informed the readers of *The Nation* that “when the fleet is lying in any English port there is leave given to everyone who minds to take it; but immediately they come to the coast of Ireland leave is restricted”, particularly if any infringement of discipline (no matter how small) had been recorded against the sailor in the previous year.²⁵⁰ This suggests that the lessons learned from the infiltration of the army by Fenians had been applied and had influenced the practice of giving leave within Irish waters. Isolated incidents within both the RN and the Marines had indeed surfaced, but had ultimately been dismissed as inconsequential.²⁵¹ Suspicions peaked when it was reported by the

²⁴⁶ Frederick to Lieutenant Francis C De Lousada Ergine, 27 Sept. 1867. TNA, ADM 1/6574.

²⁴⁷ *Irish Times*, 10 Jan. 1868.

²⁴⁸ Dr Mackesy, (JP for Waterford city) 47 to C/S Mayo 11 Jan., 1868. NLI, Mayo Papers. MS 11,170/1

²⁴⁹ Admiral Dacres had refused members of Belfast Corporation permission to come aboard the flagship, and exacerbated the insult by personally declining their invitation to a day’s entertainment in Belfast city. See, *Irish Times*, 21 Sept. 1863.

²⁵⁰ *The Nation*, 19 Sept. 1868.

²⁵¹ See for example report on William Crawley, suspected Fenian on board HMS Cambridge. 10 Apr., 1866. NAI, CSORP 1866. Box 1701,

DMP that one of the participants in the Chester raid was dressed “as a midshipman or something in that style.”²⁵²

The final visit of the Fleet, in that decade at least, was for the laying of the foundation stone of the new Royal Docks at Queenstown, and this was accompanied by all the usual pomp and ceremony including a visit from local dignitaries, the Lords of the Admiralty, and the Lord Lieutenant for the ceremony on 30 September 1869, which marked the culmination of the period of Navalization, with Lord Auckland’s desire to see a more permanent naval station in Ireland finally coming to fruition.²⁵³ The outbreak of the Land War would again see the constabulary use of the RN in Ireland, as mentioned by Frank Rynne, and that development might prove an interesting episode for future research in this field.²⁵⁴

* * *

This chapter has argued that in the mid-Victorian period Ireland experienced a significant process of “navalization” that went far beyond the simple extended deployment of ships, but rather saw the RN becoming far more integrally linked to the social, economic, civil, and military life of Ireland in a way that has been shielded from previous historiographies both by the inherent “sea-blindness” and by the general trends within Fenian historiography. The final word could perhaps most suitably be left to a lowly naval Lieutenant, Algernon Littleton, who noted in his diary that while in Ireland,

We never saw any Fenians, which was what took us out; but I used to amuse myself when officer of the watch [by] diligently chasing everything we saw and running as close as I possibly could without colliding. [I have] pleasant recollections of Queenstown, with its harriers for exercise and all the gaieties, and almost forget the miseries of the three weeks dusting down off Cape Clear in the middle of Winter and one or two others of shorter duration.²⁵⁵

²⁵² Col. H. Atwell Lake, Commissioner DMP to Larcom, 4 Apr., 1867. NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 1735, 5953.

²⁵³ *Irish Times*, 30 Sept. 1869.

²⁵⁴ Frank Rynne, “The Permanent Revolutionaries: The IRB and the Land War in West Cork” in Fearghal McGarry and James McConnel (eds.), *The Black Hand of Republicanism – Fenianism in Modern Ireland* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2009), 63.

²⁵⁵ Unpublished Diary of Algernon C Littleton. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich. MS 76/184. Original Typescript, Page 154.

In many ways, the social, rather than naval, slant of Littleton's recollections exemplify the difficulties in describing and assessing the effectiveness of RN action in Ireland when even those few accounts of the participants that survive omit useful judgments. It also highlights the need to re-evaluate the role of the sea, the medium through which both Fenian and anti-Fenian activities flowed.

The Admiralty remained as alert as any other branch of state power, perhaps even more so. Within a month of the rising, and clearly reminiscent of the overt displays of force off the east coast in the aftermath of the 1848 rising, the Admiralty directed that a large demonstration of force should be undertaken. Admiral Frederick ordered that all the vessels under his command should "be shown along the coast in the vicinity of the places where they may be stationed... [and that] advantage is to be taken of these cruizes [sic] to exercise the ships company at target practice. The allowance of ammunition is to be expended during each quarter."²⁵⁶ Rather than stressing the conservation of both munitions and coals, this self-consciously martial display can be interpreted as meeting the Admiralty's need to reinforce a far more direct and immediate policy of deterrence.

The RN's large-scale deployment continued until the start of the following year, but entered a period of increased constabularization. This is clearly demonstrated in the fact that from June 1867 to January 1868 the RN depended almost exclusively on 'Gunboats' and developed a closer integration with the Coastguard vessels. As Table 5.5 indicates, and with the exception of HMS *Research*, the remaining twelve vessels in Irish waters were either gunboats or Coastguard vessels, and is a clear signal of the Admiralty's shift in its perceived functioning in Ireland towards a constabularized navy. This might be interpreted as demonstrating the Admiralty's desire to maintain the highest level of deterrence while committing the minimum of men, hardware, and money to Ireland's coasts. This previously neglected dimension of Irish security policy synthesises the growing literature on mid-Victorian naval activity, exemplified by Lambert, Rodgers, Beeler, Schurman, and Zaforteza, and applies its imperial criteria to the

²⁵⁶ Adm. Frederick, "General Memo". 3 Apr 1867. TNA ADM1/6574.

provision of Irish internal security for the first time. In so doing, it seeks to rediscover the place that Ireland held in the Admiralty's broader imperial processes.

Chapter 6 - The Royal Marines and the Fenians

Throughout the mid-Victorian period, the Royal Marines (hereafter 'Marines')¹ contributed to counterinsurgency roles in Ireland that were as diverse as their motto "Per Mare, Per Terra –By Land and By Sea". Marines fulfilled a military function that was distinctive, making their presence in Ireland in the mid-Victorian period all the more worthy of individual attention. Traditionally in peacetime their main functions were to provide security to naval officers and enforce discipline on-board ship, but in wartime they engaged enemy ships, either from ship-based fire, or through the boarding of enemy vessels. That neither of these circumstances applied in Ireland resulted in the marines being employed in a whole different set of roles. This included the traditional 'rapid-reaction' and 'deterrence' deployments, the manning of coastal fortifications, the support of exposed Coastguard stations, and fulfilling constabulary functions all over Ireland. Throughout the mid-Victorian period their deployments to Ireland increased both in terms of size and duration, and this demonstrated the Irish Executive's growing dependence on what was a uniquely flexible branch of the state's military power. Initially sequestered within the walls of the new ironclad ships, beyond the reach of the agents of the nationalist organizations, the Marines represented an often-unseen face of Admiralty power. This isolation, however, diminished. Having once held a particularly high cachet as a deterrent force based on their infrequent usage, the Marines became progressively more integrated into the *ad hoc* defensive systems employed in Ireland, but by necessity, rather than design.

To assess their full strategic impact in Ireland is to examine the Marines not only across all these wide-ranging functions, but also to consider them as a contingent force. By this we should understand that they were *ipso facto* linked to other branches of state power, be it the RN at sea, or the Army, the Coastguard, or the Constabulary on shore. The Marines rarely acted independently but maintained a position of significance as a cog within the broader system, as had been traditional in their recruitment, training, and standard operations, all of

¹ I have chosen 'Marines' rather than abbreviating to RM to avoid confusion with the common usage of RM to denote a Resident Magistrate in the Irish context.

which were closely linked to army practices.² This chapter considers not only what the Marines did, but also what their presence facilitated. Furthermore, it illustrates the tension between the Irish Executive's desire to use the Marines as frequently as possible and the reciprocal insistence on the part of the Admiralty that they maintain autonomous control over their forces, regardless of how inconsistently that insistence was applied.

The Royal Marines were founded in 1755, but had their roots in the Duke of York and Albany's Maritime Regiment of Foot formed in 1664 during the Second Anglo-Dutch War. Their first deployment to Ireland came in 1690, but thereafter it was Ireland's strength as a source of recruitment that dominated the relationship.³ The Corps was structured around three divisions based in Chatham, Portsmouth, and Plymouth, all commanded directly by the Admiralty. The 1798 Rebellion saw a small detachment of Marines augmenting the crew of a RN gunboat in Waterford whose function was "to secure a landing for a body of troops expected from Portsmouth."⁴ By the nineteenth century they had moved beyond the inferior status they occupied relative to the Army from which they had suffered in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Throughout the Victorian period their social status within British military circles kept them subordinate to the other services, though their military reputation was on the rise. As Thompson has warned, however, it would be mistaken to imagine that corps of the eighteenth century "were recruited, trained, and perceived as an elite crack force such as the Rifle Brigade when it was raised in 1801."⁵ Rather, the importance of their role by the Victorian period was primarily ascribed to their singular flexibility and their ability to move "ten or a thousand miles, at twelve hours notice" without burdensome red

² Donal Bittner, 'Shattered Images: Officers of Royal Marines, 1867-1913', *The Journal of Military History* Vol. 59, no. No. 1 (January 1995): 27-30.

³ Cyril Field, *Britain's Sea Soldiers* (Liverpool: Lyceum Press, 1924), 179.

⁴ Field, 180. Though it had long been held that the United Irishmen were heavily implicated in the Plymouth Barracks Mutiny in 1798, recent work has questioned this assumption. See, Britt Zerbe, *The Birth of the Royal Marines 1664-1802* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013), 153-57; Field, *Britain's Sea Soldiers*, 180.

⁵ Julian Thompson, *The Royal Marines - From Sea Soldiers to a Special Force* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 2000), 17.

tape, and it was this versatility that made them so appealing to successive Irish administrations.⁶

Structurally, from the 1850s there were two different branches, the Royal Marine Light Infantry (RMLI) and the Royal Marine Artillery (RMA). The RMLI were known by the soubriquet 'Red Jackets' because they often fought as skirmishers alongside the regular army, whereas the RMA were known as the 'Blue Jackets', as they tended to be more focussed on traditional shipboard activity and the occasional manning of coastal fortification. A distinction also existed between 'supernumerary' Marines, those that were additional to normal requirements, and regular 'ship's complement' Marines who were stationed on board ships for standard duty. The deployment of supernumerary Marines often signified a more substantial threat and a commensurate escalation in the Admiralty's response to that threat.

The same general historiographic trend that has limited attention to the mid-Victorian RN is even more pronounced when it comes to the Marines. To this end, Thompson has compared the Victorian Marines to the French Foreign Legion, noting that "both gained their reputations after years of gruelling service *in far corners of the world*, often unheard, unseen, and too frequently unappreciated."⁷ Although still far short of the Royal Marine Commandos that emerged in World War II, they were clearly a force to be reckoned with. In the nineteenth-century empire as a whole they were involved in "policing *Pax Britannica*", a period during which "revolutionaries were a continuous source of minor affrays" with which the Marines were forced to deal.⁸ The general focus on larger operational histories is slightly surprising in the light of Grover's assertion that the "work of 'Imperial Policing' and minor wars is a task which falls more on our Corps than, perhaps, any other", with this function denied significant historiographic attention.⁹ Constabularized services lacked the glorious battlefield episodes of the Crimea, the

⁶ Richard Brooks, *The Royal Marines - 1664 to the Present* (London: Constable and Robinson Ltd, 2002), 157.

⁷ Julian Thompson, *A Short History of the Royal Marines* (Portsmouth: Royal Marines Historical Society, 2008), 5. Original Emphasis.

⁸ J.L Moulton, *The Royal Marines* (Hampshire: Royal Marines Museum, 1981), 42.

⁹ G.W.M. Grover, *A Short History of the Royal Marines* (Aldershot: Gale and Polden Ltd, 1948), 28.

Indian Mutiny, or the Boxer Rebellions in which they were deemed to have served with distinction. As with much military history, the social impact of the force acting in peacekeeping and deterrent function continues to be relatively under-explored. This lacuna is further compounded within Irish military historiography. Bartlett and Jeffreys' *A Military History of Ireland*, for example, refers only once to the Marines in Ireland, and even this is in relation to the issue of recruitment rather than their strategic deployments in the eighteenth century or after.¹⁰

Few historians of the Marines examine their deployments to Ireland in the nineteenth century. Field's 1924 work, *Britain's Sea Soldiers*, is the only one that dedicates any attention to the subject of Ireland, but it adopts a generally derogatory tone that might, in part, explain why later historians eschewed this area. He notes that the Marine Corps rendered great service to Britain in "the suppression of disturbances and incipient rebellion in Ireland", though this work was "unattended by the 'pomp and circumstance of glorious war.'"¹¹ While Field dedicates two paragraphs to the Young Ireland Rising, and half a dozen pages to the 1881-2 deployments against the Invincibles, the Fenian period is dismissed in a single sentence. This retrospective lack of attention to Ireland reflects the fact that in the mid-1860s there were only fourteen Marines permanently stationed in Ireland, aboard the guard ship, HMS *Hastings* in Queenstown.¹² Despite the lack of historiographic attention, it is worth noting that General Rose felt assured that key Irish coastal infrastructure was safe because "they [the Fenians] will never attack these places, openly without American "troupes de mer et de terre".¹³

The Royal Marines and Repeal

The first and most enduring use of the Marines in Ireland was for deterrence, which can be most obviously seen during the Repeal Crisis in 1843-4. This period saw the reintroduction of a significant RN force into Irish waters, known as the "Repeal Fleet", of which the Marines were a significant component.¹⁴ The growing

¹⁰ Bartlett and Jeffery, *A Military History of Ireland*, 12.

¹¹ Field, *Britain's Sea Soldiers*, 177.

¹² *Ships in Commission Report*, October 1865, 9.

¹³ Rose to Wodehouse, 11 Feb., 1866. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,822, 1-8.

¹⁴ *Irish Examiner*, 9 Aug., 1843.

influence of the Repeal Association's "Monster Meetings" and the state trials of the Repeal leaders resulted in a series of deployments of Marines to Ireland. Their use was noted in the unofficial mouthpiece of the movement, *The Nation*, which described the deployment under the telling headline, "Elements of Coercion".¹⁵ The Marines were often ship-based, but were "frequently landed for exercise" on shore. Drill and parade based around Cork Harbour was most common, a pattern that would be repeated in subsequent years.¹⁶

The initial deployment focussed on Waterford, Kinsale, Cork, and Dublin. The battalion was initially headquartered at Waterford, closer to their bases along the southern coast of England, but by September 1843 a more permanent headquarters was established at Spike Island, presumably to avail of Queenstown's victualling and administrative infrastructure, which was required to support this longer-than-anticipated deployment.¹⁷ Table 6.1 notes the dates of arrival of a total of 970 Marines, a number that represented the equivalent of an additional regiment and a half of the army, but to that number must be added those on board the Royal Navy's Squadron of Evolution that visited Ireland intermittently throughout this period, and held their Marines ready for deployment at a moment's notice. Such a significant deployment might be viewed as having a correspondingly strong deterrent value.

¹⁵ *The Nation*, 24 Jun., 1843.

¹⁶ *Cork Examiner*, 9 Aug., 1843.

¹⁷ *Cork Examiner*, 27 Sept., 1843.

Table 6.1. Deployments of Royal Marines to Ireland, 1843-4

<u>Date</u>	<u>No. & Rank of Royal Marines</u>	<u>Location</u>
29.5.43	3 Capt, 3 Lieut, 12 Sgt, 250 Pvt	Cork
5.6.43	274 All Ranks	Cork (Total – 574)
17.6.43	1 Capt, 1 Lieut, 86 NCO & Pvt	Waterford
20.12.43	100 RM & 100 Sailors with small arms	Tarbert
16.1.44	30 All Ranks	Bantry Bay
30.1.44	150 All Ranks	Spike Island
15.2.44	30 All Ranks	Tarbert
19.2.44	RM's replace Army in lower Shannon forts	
	Total Deployment (approx.)	970

Source: NAI, CSORP 1843. Boxes 1261-2, CSORP 1844, Box 1331

Examining just one of these deployments, the 100-130 Marines that were dispatched to Tarbert in the Shannon Estuary, provides a valuable insight into their intended usage and might be considered to be broadly representative of Marines deployment in Ireland in this period. It was divided into six companies that occupied the forts at Scatterry, Donaha, Tarbert, Carrick, Kilcredane, and Kilkeenan on the Lower Shannon, freeing up Regulars for a range of other services, while another contingent of Marines remained on board in anticipation of a possible outbreak of violence.¹⁸ The deployment represents the potential for the Marines to take a far more active role in the internal security of Ireland, if needed. Captain Blackwood RN evaluated these multiple functions in a report to the Military Secretary in Kilmainham by noting that

HMS *Fox* [is] at Tarbert ... to co-operate with me in the River Shannon and the coasts of this district, in any manner that circumstances may require. There are, I understand, 100 Marines on board the *Fox*, and 100 sailors trained to the use of small arms. There are also a number of large boats, and guns, or carronades ready to be fitted in them, and a field-piece, which can be landed on any part of the coast where it may be required. The advantage ... in the event of an insurrection and the confidence that their appearance, even now, gives to the loyal inhabitants of this part of the country cannot be too highly appreciated.¹⁹

The stipulation that they may be used “in any manner that circumstances may require” included activity on the Shannon. This plan (see page 263) envisioned between twenty-eight and fifty-five Marines stationed upriver of Limerick in order to guarantee lines of communication and transport in the midlands.

¹⁸ *Freeman's Journal*, 16 Jun., 1843.

¹⁹ Report of Capt. Blackwood RN, enclosure in Col. Reans (Mil Sec) to Major General Downes, 20 Dec., 1843. NAI, CSORP 1843, M 18314.

Long-term deployment of Marines to Ireland presented social and administrative difficulties for the Admiralty. The Irish Quartermaster General wrote to Dublin Castle complaining of the number of marriages in one company of Marines in Duncannon Fort, Co. Wexford on the grounds that it may have impacted on their ability to provide counterinsurgency support. After seven months in that location, Commanding General Blakeney felt that it was desirable to exchange that company with another from Spike Island because “too great an intimacy exists between the soldiers [Marines] and the people of the place.”²⁰ If the Marines were to maintain their deterrent capabilities, their appearance needed to remain more overtly detached. However, both in Duncannon Fort and on the Lower Shannon, the Marines’ deployment continued well past the end of the Repeal agitation. Media reports concerning the “respected and esteemed” opinion of the Marines in those forts, and their subsequent relief and reinforcement continued well into 1845.²¹

The presence of Marines outside their ships and forts can also be seen as contributory to their overall strategic impact. Positive reports of Marines participating in wider society as well as negative accounts of court cases involving brawling Marines both accentuated aspects of the Marines’ “presence” on shore. Reports of officer promotions and attendance at Dublin Castle levees demonstrate continued media interest in Marines’ activities.²² To the townspeople of Youghal, for example, the Marines “earned ‘golden opinions’ from all classes of the inhabitants, for their steadiness, sobriety and inoffensive behaviour.”²³ On the other hand, a relatively banal case of robbery became more widely reported because the accused was Royal Marine Lieutenant Puddicombe. The intrigue was generated by the fact that the case was seen as “implicating the character of an officer in her Majesty’s service to a most serious extent.”²⁴ Perhaps the only direct confrontation between a Repealer and a Marine was reported with interest in *The Nation* who described Private Abraham Leader of the Marines assaulting a

²⁰ QMG to Lucas (U/S), 28 Feb., 1844. NAI, CSORP 1844. Box 1331, M 2908.

²¹ *Tralee Chronicle and Killarney Echo*. Feb., 1845.

²² See for example, *Freeman’s Journal*, 7 Mar., 1844.

²³ *Cork Examiner*, 1 Aug., 1845.

²⁴ *Cork Reporter*, 10 Sept., 1844. *Freeman’s Journal*, 13 Sept., 1844.

Repealer and stripping him of his Repeal button and jacket before dragging him about and striking him with a stick “for the purpose of a lark”, before the intervention of the Constabulary.²⁵ While no single media report can be pointed to as conclusive, it is evident that the wide range of reports throughout the period helped to cement the Marines’ strategic impact in their anti-Repeal deterrence role.

Royal Marines and Young Ireland - 1848

The Young Ireland Rising continued the use of Marines in Ireland to provide both ‘strategic mobility’ and varying forms of deterrence. During the two separate naval deployments described in the RN chapter, the Marines were considered to be an essential component of the Admiralty’s reaction. While the First Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Auckland, was quick to dispatch 300 Marines to Cork in anticipation of John Mitchel’s state trial, it was not until mid-July that the first supernumerary Marines arrived in Ireland, supplemented by the detachments of Marines aboard the ships of Admiral Napier’s Channel Squadron.²⁶

Given the south-eastern focus of the summer rising, it was to Cork and Waterford that the main active deployments were sent. Although there were no “disposable Marines in Cork” in the days immediately following the rising, the arrival of Admiral Napier’s squadron put large numbers at the disposal of Lord Lieutenant Clarendon. As Admiral Mackay, commanding in Queenstown, informed Clarendon, there would “be dispatched this morning, for Waterford, as many Marines as can be spared from the Squadron together with field pieces.”²⁷ The initial goal of this deployment of 450 Marines was “to release some of the troops in that Garrison in order that they may reinforce those in the interior.”²⁸ Therefore, even though they were not actively deployed in combat roles, they freed up the equivalent of a regiment of regulars already more familiar with the area to engage in whatever counterinsurgency function was needed.

²⁵ *The Nation*, 15 Jun., 1844.

²⁶ The deployment of ‘supernumerary’ marines is indicative of a growing threat of a need to quell and upcoming insurrection.

²⁷ Adm. Mackay to Clarendon, 27 Jul., 1848. MSS. Clar. dep. Irish Box 69.

²⁸ Adm. Mackay to Clarendon, 19 Sept., 1848. Ibid.

Table 6.2. Royal Marines in Waterford, July-September 1848

	Field Officers	Captains	Lieutenants	Staff	Staff Lieut	Sergeant	Corporal	Bombardiers	Drummers	Buglers	Privates ²⁹	Gunners	Total
<i>Rhadamathus</i>	1	3	9	2	2	13	11		4		268		313
<i>Alban</i>		1	2			3	3	3	7	1		69	89
Total	1	4	11	2	2	16	14	3	11	1	268	69	402

Admiral Mackay to U/S Redington, 19 Jan., 1849. NAI, CSORP 1849. Box 1569, M 641

These Marines at Waterford also facilitated other forms of power projection on Irish rivers that were familiar to the corps. In action reminiscent of the 1843 Shannon Plan, Marines operated on the River Suir as far upstream as Clonmel (30 miles upriver) to deter the “bargemen and watermen” considered to be the “most unruly of the inhabitants of the neighbourhood.”²⁹ While these actions were seen as effective deterrents, they flew in the face of Auckland’s advice when he warned that, “The less that they are sent inland on detached duty the better.”³⁰ This continued the consistent reluctance on the part of the Admiralty to cede too much control over their forces. It also highlighted the administrative difficulties of operating without “proper staff and materials” associated with medium-term deployment of Marines to the Irish coast.³¹ Ultimately, it was “the foul fiend economy” that pushed Auckland to seek the return of his Marines to their “peace establishments”.³²

The Admiralty did not compile detailed documentation about Marines sent to Ireland in this period, making it difficult to calculate the precise numbers involved in 1848. From available sources, however, the peak deployment seems to have been approximately 1,100, with the total throughout the year between 1,500 and 2,000, but not all concurrently.³³ Even these estimates may be somewhat misleading, as it is extremely difficult to know exactly how many were actually disembarked from their ships; what the length of the deployments were; and what

²⁹ ‘Report of Lieutenant Sherard Osborn’ Commanding HMS *Dwarf*, 27 Sept., 1848. Enclosure in Adm. Mackay to Redington, 1 Oct., 1848. NAI, CSORP 1848. Box 1501, M 9,500.

³⁰ Auckland to Clarendon, 22 Sept., 1848. MSS. Clar. dep. Irish Box 1 (bundle 10).

³¹ Auckland to Clarendon, 20 Sept., 1848. Ibid.

³² Auckland to Clarendon, 1 Dec. & 28 Dec., 1848. Ibid.

³³ Auckland to Clarendon, 20 Jul. 1848. Ibid.

their precise duties on shore entailed. This difficulty is further compounded by Admiral Napier's desire to heighten the Marines' deterrent value by putting "these resources to good use by landing Marines and organizing numerous field days and sham-fights on shore", as had been the practice five years earlier.³⁴ Despite the necessity for withdrawal, Auckland reassured the Irish Viceroy that "it will have become notorious that you can have further help at short notice."³⁵

Counter-Fenian activity

The use of Marines in Ireland during the Fenian crisis involved a delicate balancing act between maintaining the types of deterrence role established in the 1840s with their increasing functions in aid of the civil power. This constabularization saw them being used as supplements to the Irish Constabulary and Dublin Metropolitan Police as well as additional prison guards, while also supplementing the Army and Coastguard with detachments in exposed locations and in coastal fortifications. Unlike the Army, however, there was a continual, though not always successful, insistence from the Admiralty that their use not become standardised within the Irish defensive system.

In early autumn 1865 neither Wodehouse nor the First Lord of the Admiralty, the Duke of Somerset, expected the Marines to play any significant role in the defence of Ireland. In reply to the Irish Executive's request for help from the Navy, Somerset maintained that "The Marines and sailors cannot be employed in searching for arms, nor in a demonstration of force at a distance from the coast."³⁶ Nor did Wodehouse "expect the ships to land marines", but he was reassured by the fact that the sailors and Marines "might have a good effect in encouraging the loyal and discouraging the disaffected."³⁷ The rapid escalation in Fenian activity that autumn, however, meant that this entirely ship-based deterrence role for the Marines was almost immediately superseded.

³⁴ Williams, *The Life and Letters of Admiral Sir Charles Napier, K.C.B.*, II:225. For details of specific actions see TNA, ADM 50/251, "Rear Admiral Sir Charles Napier, Journal of HMS *St Vincent* for the Quarter ending 30 June 1848".

³⁵ Auckland to Clarendon, 24 Sept., 1848. MSS. Clar. dep. Irish Box 1 (bundle 10).

³⁶ Duke of Somerset to Wodehouse, 13 Sept., 1865. Bodl., Kim. Ms Eng C 4031, 134-5.

³⁷ Wodehouse to Somerset, 14 Sept. 1865., Bodl., Kim. Ms Eng C 4031, 142.

The early deployment of Marines “in aid of the civil power” is illustrative of their quick integration into the other branches of the state’s military infrastructure in Ireland, far beyond that originally conceived of in early September. Less than a week after the Irish Executive’s agreement with the Admiralty, the Cork Petty Sessions Court requested help from the Admiral in Cork to preserve the peace in Queenstown after the arrest of Fenians charged with High Treason (as a part of the same operations that saw the arrests of those involved with the *Irish People* newspaper in Dublin). Writing to Rear-Admiral Frederick the Resident Magistrates requested that “a party of Forty or Fifty men of the Royal Marines [be landed] on shore at Queenstown in aid of the Civil power which is not adequate to preserve the peace.”³⁸ Therefore by necessity, rather than design, the Marines were seen, and began to be employed, in a constabulary role much like their over-stretched army colleagues.

This blurring of the lines between the Marines’ military and constabulary roles continued throughout the period, to the point at which their use was coming at the suggestion of the naval officers themselves. In another intersection of civil and military responsibilities, Captain Miller (Commanding the guard ship the *Royal George* in Kingstown and simultaneously a Resident Magistrate) suggested employing the Marines under his command in the event of an outbreak. This led Rose to comment, “I think that your proposed plan of employing Marines in the event of an outbreak... a very good one”, particularly in their proposed role of protecting the docking of the mail steamer and of guaranteeing lines of communication with Britain.³⁹ Captain Miller’s willingness to cooperate with other branches of power was described as “good natured, and [having] consented at once”, particularly in allowing his detachment of Marines to remain inland for the protection of Enniskerry at the request of Lord Powerscourt.⁴⁰ Acquiescing to the logic behind Powerscourt’s request, Rose wrote in support of their deterrent role noting, “I agree with you that their presence... will produce a good effect.”⁴¹ The

³⁸ Petty Sessions Court to Adm. Frederick, 18 Sept. 1865. TNA, ADM 1/6574.

³⁹ Rose to Miller, 2 Dec., 1866. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,822, 318.

⁴⁰ Rose to Powerscourt, 10 Mar., 1867. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,823, 247.

⁴¹ Rose to Powerscourt, 9 Mar., 1867. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,823, 238.

detachment of sixty Marines was subsequently split in half, with thirty despatched to protect the coastal town of Bray, which may have been another unacknowledged reason why Patrick Lennon's Fenians avoided that area (see page 114).⁴² The remaining Marines were held in place until the point at which their presence was rendered unnecessary by the newly established Flying Columns that began to deal more effectively with the bands of Fenians roaming the Wicklow Mountains after their dispersal at Tallaght Hill.⁴³ Rather than become incorporated into this high-profile role, however, most Marines in Ireland were employed in far less glamorous tasks.

Royal Marines as Prisoner Escorts

The Marines' constabulary functions were further exploited through their use as escorts during the transportation of Fenian convicts en route to English prisons in the aftermath of the Special Commission in Cork at the end of 1865. Distinctly different from the use of the RN on the South and West coasts, the securing of the Irish Sea was a key responsibility of the Marines. Here they integrated operationally with other branches of civil and military power. Security concerns surrounding the transportation of Fenian convicts had emerged as early as December 1865 with both Wodehouse and Home Secretary George Grey eager to avoid "all risk of demonstration and excitement" in Dublin, Liverpool, or Holyhead, through all of which the prisoners might travel.⁴⁴ After removal from Mountjoy prison by the police with a cavalry escort, the Fenian prisoners were brought to Kingstown and boarded the civilian mail steamer "in charge of prison officers and a guard of the Royal Marines belonging to the HMS *Royal George* (guard ship in Kingstown)."⁴⁵ This use of Marines became the standard method of transporting Fenian convicts in a potentially incendiary situation, illustrated by the repetition of this process the following month to transport a further thirteen convicts to Pentonville.⁴⁶ Similarly, during the Chester Raid in February 1867 the Marines in

⁴² For details of detachment size see; Miller to Larcom, 7 Mar., 1867. NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 1732, 3835. William S. Tracy RM to Naas, 9 Mar., 1867. NAI, CSORP. Box 1732, 3887.

⁴³ Rose to Powerscourt, 16 Mar., 1867. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,823, 266.

⁴⁴ Grey to Wodehouse, 5 Dec. 1865. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng. C. 4037, 83-4.

⁴⁵ *Irish Times*, 17 Jan., 1866.

⁴⁶ *Irish Times*, 12 Feb., 1866.

Holyhead were used to guard the Dublin mail steamer which had been held in the harbour, away from the slip, to ensure its continued security.⁴⁷ By the time the transportation of ex-soldiers court martialled for complicity with the Fenians in September 1866 was undertaken, the use of Marines appears to have become standard practice but, as will be demonstrated, a practice that quickly passed from popular memory.⁴⁸

Royal Marines and Land Fortifications

As in the 1840s, the Marines played a valuable role in the manning of fortifications. This use is particularly noteworthy when viewed within the developing idea of 'Imperial Defence' that had held the manning of coastal fortifications and the defence of naval bases should not be undertaken by elements of the Admiralty. In the years immediately following the main Fenian scares, Captain J.C.R. Colomb, a retired officer of the Royal Marine Artillery, proposed the strategic concept that making the Admiralty responsible for manning "local defences would gravely detract from the fleet's capacity to protect trade at sea, its primary mission."⁴⁹ Although limited in scale and duration, such a use of the Marines violated the principle "that all naval bases should support rather than hinder fleet operations, [a concept that] was strictly in accordance with contemporary Admiralty policy", albeit a policy in germination rather than fully accepted or adopted.⁵⁰

Virtually simultaneously with the initial deployments in September 1865, Admiral Frederick consulted with Major General Bates (commanding the Army's Cork Division) as to the vulnerable points in the district and was informed that Fort Camden (at the western entrance to Cork harbour) was the weakest point in the harbour, manned "only by a garrison of 25 men" whom he could not reinforce due to the strain on his current resources.⁵¹ To that number Frederick added a Sergeant and twenty-five rank and file Marines to bolster the defensive force. Now,

⁴⁷ *The Anglo-Celt*, 16 Feb. 1867.

⁴⁸ *Irish Times*, 5 Sept., 1866.

⁴⁹ Cited in: Mackenzie Schurman, *Imperial Defence*, 28. Here, for "Fleet" we can read both Royal Navy and Royal Marines.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Frederick to Secretary of the Admiralty, 16 Sept., 1865. TNA, ADM 1/5920 (L462).

as later, the Marines were aiming “to meet any emergency and to afford any assistance in support of the Military authorities.”⁵² As with the 1843 Waterford deployment, the use of Marines as a ‘strategic accordion’ facilitated the work of other branches.

Table 6.3. Royal Marines on board ships in Irish Waters, September 1865

Marines aboard Ship 1865	Total All Ranks
<i>Hastings</i>	14
<i>Edgar</i>	135
<i>Black Prince</i>	125
<i>Achilles</i>	125
<i>Prince Consort</i>	100
<i>Hector</i>	70
<i>Defence</i>	70
<i>Liverpool</i>	70
<i>Gladiator</i>	70
<i>Research</i>	20
<i>Wyvern</i>	25
<i>Helicon</i>	7
Total	831

Source: Ships in Commission, October 1865, National Museum of the Royal Navy, Portsmouth

The perceived threat of a rising in November 1866 led to an initial reinforcement of Marines to Cork, reflecting a further homogenization and coordination of the multiple branches of state power. A strategic planning meeting between Chief Secretary Naas, First Lord of the Admiralty Sir John Pakington, General Rose, and Secretary of State for War, Jonathan Peel (younger brother of 2nd Baronet Robert Peel PM) decided that the provision of resources necessitated by that current scare would best be addressed by having “more gunboats and a larger force of ships with *double quantity of marines on board*”.⁵³ *The Globe* reported that the Marines were conceived of as “an additional measure of precaution to meet any attempted Fenian outbreak in that country.”⁵⁴ In this instance 100 Marines (one captain, four subalterns, and 97 NCOs and men of the Chatham Division) were to

⁵² Admiralty to Frederick, 7 Mar., 1867. ADM 149/2.

⁵³ Naas to Abercorn, 22 Nov., 1866. PRONI, Abercorn Papers. D623/a/304/3.

⁵⁴ *The Globe*, (syndicated in *The Nation*, 1 Dec., 1866). This deployment was carried out along with the transportation of the 28th, 39th, and 52nd Regiments to Kingstown and Belfast respectively.

be stationed on HMS *Black Prince*, and a similar force was to be assigned to HMS *Frederick William*, the Queenstown Coastguard vessel.

The manning of Cork Harbour fortification by Marines began in March 1867. This process was specifically designed to free up the Army regulars to form the Cork and Waterford Flying Columns that were so significant in the suppression of what did emerge as the Fenian rising. On 6 March 1867 *The Nation* was quick to report that “after taking on board 800 of the Royal Marines and three field officers, the *Caledonia* and the *Clyde* proceeded yesterday to Bantry Bay”, with the Marines due to be landed at Cork.⁵⁵ The actual number of Marines deployed was 767, and their distribution was subtler than merely “at Cork”. While 242 were barracked in Cork City, the remainder of the Marines were distributed to Fort Carlisle (100), Fort Camden (145), Spike Island (180), Haulbowline (70), and Rocky Island (30).⁵⁶ This deployment was to be “placed at the disposal of Major General Bates” (in command of the Southern Division), with Admiral Frederick hoping to “hold 150 in hand here for any contingency that may occur.”⁵⁷ This deployment would be used to free up elements of the 62nd Regiment “as soon as the Military Authorities can make the necessary arrangements.”⁵⁸ In this instance, the rapid reactions of the Marines actually out-stripped the ability of the army to vacate their positions and be relieved by the Marines, which demonstrates just how agile and effective this force could be in Ireland. The recurring theme of the Marines to be used “for any contingency” indicates their potential for substantially greater usage in the event of a more menacing nationwide rising.

⁵⁵ *The Nation*, 9 Mar., 1867.

⁵⁶ Frederick to Secretary of the Admiralty, 11 Mar. 1867. TNA, ADM 149/2.

⁵⁷ Adm. Frederick to Chief Secretary Naas, 8 Mar., 1867. NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 1732, 3897.

⁵⁸ Frederick to Secretary of the Admiralty, 9 Mar. 1867. TNA, ADM 149/2.

Map 6.1. Royal Marines in Cork, March 1867



Source: Adm Frederick to C/S Naas, 8 Mar., 1867. NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 1732, 3897

The Psychological Impact of the Royal Marines

Although fewer requisitions from Resident Magistrates and Justices of the Peace specifically requested that Marines be made available, there seems to have been a general awareness that Marines would add to the power projected by the Admiralty in Ireland. By the end of 1866, for example, William Mackasey JP of Waterford wrote to Abercorn to “suggest the necessity of leaving a Ship of War, of some size in the River [Suir] with an extra force of marines on board.”⁵⁹ The previous winter Waterford had been played host to HMS *Research* and her company of twenty Marines. It was soon withdrawn and replaced with a much smaller gunboat, much to the amusement of the locals who “laughed at [the gunboat] and they knew the idea that they could take it whenever they pleased. Therefore these [smaller] vessels have no influence in keeping the disaffected population in order.”⁶⁰ Thus, it appears that even the presence of a small detachment of Marines was enough to dramatically improve the deterrent effect of RN vessels acting as guard ships in harbours, while at the same time they noticeably increased both the army and the RN’s ability to project power inland.

⁵⁹ William Mackasey JP to Abercorn, 27 Nov. 1866. NLI, Mayo Papers. MS 11,189/2.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

Lord Claud Hamilton, who urged an expansion of this approach, echoed the sentiment. He was

glad to see that the marines are going to be sent (although in very small numbers) to this country – [the] Government might with great advantage send to Ireland, at least for a short time, the large force which is kept doing nothing at Chatham and Portsmouth. The way to suppress Fenianism is to show the Fenians that an overwhelming force [is] on the side of order.⁶¹

Thus, the perception that the Marines were widely considered a valuable element of the broader counterinsurgency strategy is firmly established. In practical terms, however, a close level of cooperation was not always achieved, such as during the Killarney outbreak of February 1867, with Ó Broin pointing out that the Constabulary had “shut themselves up in their barracks” when even the most limited cooperation with the Marines off the coast “could easily have disposed of the Fenians.”⁶²

Throughout this period there was a growing desire on the part of the Admiralty that the Marines should remain insulated from other branches of state power. Accompanying each request from a Resident Magistrate for Marines to work in aid of the civil power, the Admiralty required the ranking marine or naval officer to “make personal enquiry as to the necessity for the measure”, thereby providing a degree of oversight as to how the Marines were used.⁶³ In an instruction that precisely mirrors the concerns of General Rose regarding the small deployments of the army, Lennox continued,

When Royal Marines are landed, care is to be taken that they are not broken up into small parties for the purposes of affording protection to villages or detached residences, or to act at a distance from the coast, or the ship in which they may be borne.⁶⁴

Lennox’s request occasionally bore fruit for the Admiralty, such as in their denial of the use of Marines in Wicklow to supplement the army in the formation of flying

⁶¹ Lord Claud Hamilton to Abercorn, 3 Dec., 1866. PRONI, Abercorn Papers, T/2541/VR/104. See also, Lord Claud Hamilton to Naas, 3 Dec., 1866. NLI, Mayo Papers. MS 43,820/6.

⁶² Fenian papers, F 3564, quoted in Ó Broin, 130-1.

⁶³ Lennox to Frederick, 26 Nov., 1866. ADM 1/6574.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

columns used to sweep up the remaining Fenians after the March rising.⁶⁵ This tendency towards insulating the Marines from excessive engagement in Irish affairs might also be viewed on an imperial scale. It accorded with Captain Colomb's principle that sought to limit Marines' role in the manning local defences, placing the use of the Marines in Ireland in an intermediate position between their uses in Britain and at the naval stations throughout the colonies.

Although no official Admiralty return exists for this period that is specific to Ireland, using the *Ships in Commission* reports from 1865-7 allows a reasonable accurate estimate to be made. In 1867 a detachment of 767 Marines was added to the 831 Marines who had already seen service (albeit at different stages) between 1865 and 1867. To this must be added the 500 deployed between November 1867 and January 1868. This represents a boost to the army's manpower of just under 12 per cent (2,098 of 17,851 in Oct 1865), but a power in coastal regions that was disproportionately greater than its paper value would suggest.⁶⁶ Between land-based and ship-based Marines, Cork city and harbour hosted approximately 1,600 Marines. This represents almost 14 per cent of total Royal Marines empire-wide, and suggests that 59 per cent of all Marines assigned to the 'Home Stations' served in some description in Cork during this two-year period. Almost reaching parity with the 2,000 Marines that were continually employed in the defence of Cork harbour during World War One, the deployment during the Fenian crisis was not as consistently high but was undoubtedly significant.⁶⁷

* * *

The deployment of Marines to Ireland continued intermittently in one form or another right up until 1921. Escalating tensions during the Land War, particularly reports of landings of arms in Ireland in 1880 resulted in the deployment 200 marines "to be located in the Cork barracks, and perform the ordinary duties of

⁶⁵ Admiralty to Frederick, 14 Mar., 1867. ADM 1/6574.

⁶⁶ *Ships in Commission Report*, Royal Navy Museum, Portsmouth, October 1865. *Hastings*, 14, *Edgar*, 135, *Black Prince* 125, *Achilles* 125, *Prince Consort* 100, *Hector* 70, *Defence* 70, *Liverpool* 79, *Gladiator* 70, *Research* 20, *Wyvern* 25, *Helicon* 7.

⁶⁷ Brunicardi, *Haulbowline, Spike and Rocky Islands in Cork Harbour*, 29.

troops.”⁶⁸ Similarly that year, electoral rioting in Sligo resulted in the Resident Magistrate calling for a demonstration of military strength in the area, noting,

It was at this time that I expressed the opinion that the West coast should be patrolled by a War Ship and that Blue Jackets and Marines might be landed if necessity arose. The suggestion for employing marines was acted upon afterwards by Lord Spencer.⁶⁹

Under normal circumstances the “power of England was to them represented by a few police”, but when extenuating circumstances existed, it was to a broader military response that local magistrates resorted. The Marines consistently remained an element of that response in coastal counties.⁷⁰

Two years later in May 1882, the increased strain on resources following the Phoenix Park Murders saw a 300 man all-volunteer Marine detachment used to augment the DMP. While they were nominally undercover, there was “no real pretence about their presence, which must have been obvious to the local population.”⁷¹ Given an additional allowance of thirty shillings per week, this deployment was highly sought after by the Marines themselves, but caused the Treasury to comment that it had “been somewhat lavishly conceived.”⁷² *The Nation* protested, erroneously claiming that the Marines had, “not shown hitherto, as far as we remember, that they possess any special qualification for the office of policemen, and yet they are the very people whom the Government have fixed upon to render assistance to the Dublin police force.”⁷³ This illustrates how the constabularization of the Marines in the 1860s had been omitted, either consciously or unintentionally only fifteen years later. These fully armed Marines, who were intended to patrol the streets in civilian dress were expected, paradoxically, to maintain military discipline despite the fact that “these new custodians of the peace are not to interfere with the ordinary duties of the police, but are simply to act in concert with them, and to be ready to help them upon all

⁶⁸ *The Nation*, 14 Aug., 1880.

⁶⁹ Diary of David Harrel. Harrel MS – TCD, MS 3918A, ‘Recollections and Reflections’, 54-5.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁷¹ Dennis Bill, *The Crinoline Church, Eastney Barracks* (Gosport: Royal Marines Historical Society, 2016), 43.

⁷² Bill, 43.

⁷³ *The Nation*, 9 Dec., 1882.

occasions.”⁷⁴ The trial of the Invincibles, whom the Marines had helped to apprehend, was secured by a group of forty Marines in plain clothes in the courtroom, but “armed with revolvers” on the off chance that disturbances ensued.⁷⁵

Despite the instances highlighted above, the continual uses of the Royal Marines in Ireland during the nineteenth century never proved decisive. Their deployment during times of impending insurrection, however, strongly indicates that their presence was increasingly considered to be an important part of the state’s overall defensive infrastructure. In what they did and in what they facilitated, the Marines were used to fill temporary holes in an otherwise well integrated but relatively *ad hoc* defence of Ireland, and as such deserve a greater degree of historiographic attention than previously received. Brooks, describing the extensive use of the Marines in Northern Ireland during the Troubles of the 1970s, noted that “never has a commitment been so thankless or interminable, seeming to an outsider to have ‘started from little and ended in nothing, neither solution nor satisfaction.’”⁷⁶ This chapter suggests that this description of the unacknowledged impact of the Royal Marines in the twentieth century could equally be applied to the mid-Victorian period.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Field, *Britain’s Sea Soldiers*, 185.

⁷⁶ Brooks, *The Royal Marines - 1664 to the Present*, 283.

Chapter 7 – “The little leaven, which leavens the whole lump”- The Irish Coastguard and Fenianism

The transnational nature of Fenianism placed a premium on coastal security in Ireland, the burden of which fell disproportionately on the Coastguard service.¹ The hardening of the Fenian threat in the months after the end of the US Civil War led one British Consul to advise that the “only efficient mode of preventing admission into Ireland is by diligent watchfulness on the part of the Coast Guard.”² This advice was far from mere speculation, however. Intelligence was flowing to the British consuls about the various Fenian invasion plans under consideration at their meetings, at which the recent experience of Confederate ‘Blockade Runners’ was considered. A discussion at one Fenian meeting considered the difficulty of preventing those small vessels entering the port of Wilmington, North Carolina, despite the presence of “a squadron of twenty vessels of War”. This was referred to as indicative of the “facility with which vessels laden with arms could be run into Irish ports.”³ In such a situation, the Coastguard could succeed where the Royal Navy might fail.

Assessing the Irish Coastguard’s contribution to the Executive’s counterinsurgency activities poses a unique set of challenges. These range from its shifting civil and military responsibilities and coastal focus, to its role as a form of reserve for the Royal Navy throughout this period. Its command, resourcing, and responsibilities all varied dramatically throughout the century leaving a problematic historiographic and archival trail. As one official history notes, “the Coastguard has had many masters, and no continuous records have been kept”, a situation compounded in relation to mid-Victorian Ireland.⁴ The initial force in Ireland, known as the Water Guard, was established in 1819 and had emerged from the inefficient 1809 Preventive Water Guard in Britain

¹ The terms “Coastguard” and “Coast Guard” are used interchangeably throughout both the historiography and source documentation in this area. For consistency, this chapter will adopt the former, unless quoting directly from a source document that adopts the latter form.

² Consular Report of Consul Barkley, New York, 16 Sept., 1865. TNA, HO 45/7799. Also included as an enclosure in ADM1/6574, 163-9.

³ Ibid.

⁴ William Webb, *Coastguard! An Official History of HM Coastguard* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1976). vii.

created at the height of the Napoleonic Wars. Its primary responsibility was to “prevent the landing of smuggled goods, whereby the arrangements of the smugglers ashore may be defeated”, but in reality it performed a wide range of civil and military tasks throughout the century.⁵ Originally, the command and organization of the land-based forces fell under the direct control of the Treasury, rather than the Board of Customs, whereas the ‘Revenue Cruisers’ were manned and commanded directly by the Admiralty. Although control of the Coastguard shifted entirely to the Admiralty by mid-century, this command structure reflects the multiple roles performed by the Coastguard, who were the third official branch of the Naval Reserve from 1831 onwards. Like their counterparts in the Royal Marines, their primary contribution to anti-Fenian operations was as a coordinating and cooperating force that acted as a bridge between land-based and sea-based branches of state military and civil power.

Though a significant minority of the Royal Navy personnel were of Irish origin, few took up commissions in the Irish Coastguard after their initial service afloat. In the early years, recruits were overwhelmingly Protestant, having “transferred from England, many from the West Country”, and often into predominantly Irish-speaking areas.⁶ The “high visibility and aggressive military design” of the Coastguard stations were “intended to be a physical proclamation of seigniorial authority.”⁷ Webb and Murray argue that during the mid-century its men were “regarded locally as just another arm of the law sent to spy on them [the Irish] and prevent them from enjoying their traditional rights.”⁸ The policing of illicit distillation placed the Coastguard in an awkward position, with the constabulary complaining in 1860 that the Coastguards would not provide vessels to raid islands off the coast. When Chief Secretary Cardwell complained to the Admiralty, he was told that, “the Lord Commissioners believed that the

⁵ Bernard Scarlett, *Shipminder: The Story of Her Majesty's Coastguard* (London, 1971), 32; Edmund Symes, ‘The Coastguard in Ireland’, *The Irish Sword* Vol. XXIII, no. No. 92 (Winter 2002): 203.

⁶ Symes, ‘The Coastguard in Ireland’, 208.

⁷ Denis Mayne, ‘Fortification as an Element in the Design of Irish Coastguard Stations, 1867-1889’, *The Irish Sword* Vol. XXX, no. No. 121 (Summer 2016): 280.

⁸ Webb, *Coastguard! An Official History of HM Coastguard*, 81; James P. Murray, ‘The Coastguard in Famine Relief on the West Coast’, *Journal of the Galway Family History Society* Vol. 5 (2007): 64–68.

coast guards were 'lowered in the estimation of the country people and the service injured by employment of their boats on the duty referred to'.⁹ This negative perception appears to have persisted until the War of Independence, at which point the Coastguard men were viewed as "symbols of imperialist Britain" and an acceptable target for IRA attack.¹⁰

The Irish Coastguard was initially commanded by the 25-year-old Napoleonic veteran, Sir James Dombrain, who resigned his naval commission in 1819 and assumed the role of Inspector-General of the force in Ireland, based in the Custom House in Dublin.¹¹ The post, held by Dombrain for a quarter of a century, was abolished after his retirement, with his responsibilities transferring instead to the Comptroller General of the Coastguard in London. As a branch of state power, however, the military value of the Coastguard as a whole was limited and functional. During periods of increased naval activity in Ireland, the Coastguard acted as a useful auxiliary to the RN, undertaking activities such as the transportation of small arms around the coast, and communicating with the RN for "the purpose of giving each other mutual intelligence." The 10 Revenue cruisers based in Ireland fulfilled these actions "as competently as might a ship of the line, but with greater efficiency."¹² By the 1860s the service employed 1,377 officers and men in 257 locations around the country. While this was still the numerical equivalent of more than two army battalions, or almost an eighth (12.1 per cent) of the Irish Constabulary allocation, it meant that the average detachment size more than halved to 5.35 men per location compared with its initial design (See Table 7.1).¹³

⁹ Vaughan, *A New History of Ireland, Volume V*, 767.

¹⁰ Scarlett, *Shipminder: The Story of Her Majesty's Coastguard*, 117.

¹¹ Edmond Symes, 'Sir James Dombrain and the Coastguard', *Dublin Historical Record* 56, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 59.

¹² Memorandum of Colonel Monro Royal Artillery to Office of Ordnance, Dublin. 10 May, 1843. NAI, CSORP, 1843. Box 1262, M 6338. Col. Mc Gregor (forwarding a letter from Capt. Hanley, 1 Jun., 1843. NAI, CSORP 1843. Box 1262, O 7386. Adm. Bowles on HMS *Volage* to Eliot (C/S). 15 Nov., 1843. NAI, CSORP 1843. Box 1261, M 15432.

¹³ Symes, 'The Coastguard in Ireland', 202–3. In the 1820s the force consisted of 2,000 men distributed around the entire coast in 160 stations, at an average of 12-13 men per location.

Table 7.1. Establishment of Officers and Men at Stations on Shore Approved by Admiralty Order, 21st May 1866.

Limerick District			
No. Districts	No. Locations	Total Officers & Chief Boatmen	Total Men
23	136	95	601
Kingstown District			
No. Districts	No. Locations	Total Officers & Chief Boatmen	Total Men
15	121	92	589
Total Countrywide			
38	257	187	1190
Total Officers and Men			1377

Source: Establishment of Officers and Men at Stations on Shore, 21st May 1866
 Caird Library, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich

Throughout the agrarian disturbances of the 1830s the Coastguard were called upon to assist the authorities “in putting down a rebellion”, though the mechanisms undertaken in this assistance have not been explored.¹⁴ The lack of an external invasion threat meant that the Coastguard were instructed to concentrate within the most easily defensible locations of their district, rather than undertake extensive military duties. The otherwise isolated detachments on the south coast were to be prepared to be “thrown into the forts” at Duncannon, the Cork Harbour forts, or Charles Fort, Kinsale at a moment’s notice.¹⁵ Similarly, at the height of the Repeal trials in the following decade, Admiral Bowles in Cork suggested that the RN vessels facilitate the creation of “strong points of concentration for the Coast Guard and Constabulary to fall back on in case of need,” and from which points of concentration later offensive action could be staged.¹⁶ That this kind of strategic concentration was embraced in the 1860s for the Constabulary, but eschewed for the Coastguard under civil control in the earlier periods, indicates the importance of maintaining the security of the Irish coasts during any period of potential invasion, regardless of the anticipated problems that would result in maintaining their small, isolated detachments.

¹⁴ Webb, *Coastguard! An Official History of HM Coastguard*, 33.

¹⁵ Summary of the orders embodied in the Secret Circular issued to the Coast Guard in Ireland on the 20 Nov., 1830. TNA, ADM 149/2.

¹⁶ Insert of Admiral Bowles 8 Feb., 1844 in Adm. Bowles to Sir Sidney Herbert, 10 Feb., 1844. TNA, ADM 149/2.

The Coastguard featured very little in the response to the Young Ireland rising of 1848, which resulted in the Admiralty calling the independence of the Irish Coastguard into question. Lord Auckland suggested the combination of the Irish and English Coastguards into one administrative unit, in part due to the improvements that might accrue with regards to the “composition of the force, and to the control of its officers,” but this proposal also reflected the personal acrimony that existed between Sir James Dombrain and his English counterpart, Captain Houston Steward, Comptroller-General of the Coast Guard.¹⁷ Lord Auckland argued for the military integration of the Coastguard in Ireland along practical lines. This should be done “without injury to its particular objects, [and] might be so organized and trained as to become a very useful force for general objects of public security.”¹⁸ This aside, Auckland did acknowledge to the Lord Lieutenant that “this centralization cannot be popular in Ireland and you will judge whether it should be pushed at present.”¹⁹ The *Cork Examiner* responded to such suggestions by noting that “Without disputing the necessity of this system of centralization, it [furnished] grounds for a ‘grievance’ when the popularity of the Government is at its lowest ebb in this country.”²⁰ Dombrain was subsequently superannuated and the responsibility for the Irish Station was transferred to the Comptroller General, but the new “Commander in Ireland” was to act “under the orders of the chief comptroller in London.” This arrangement was deemed to yield a “great saving” and produce a “more efficient” system.²¹

Although there was considerable resistance on the part of the Board of Customs, the transfer of the Coastguard to the Admiralty received royal assent on 29 July 1856 and was in operation from October of that year. Despite this change in official status and responsibilities, the Coastguard continued its delicate juggling of civil and military responsibilities, sometimes falling short on both counts.²² The fact that the officers were generally retired from the RN led to

¹⁷ Auckland to Clarendon, Oct 4 1848. MSS Clar. dep. Irish Box 1 (Bundle 10).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Cork Examiner*, 8 Dec., 1848.

²¹ *United Services Gazette*, cited in *Irish Examiner*, 20 Dec., 1848.

²² Scarlett, *Shipminder: The Story of Her Majesty's Coastguard*, 68–69.

a perception of their complacency. Rose complained that they were “generally married and very comfortable in good quarters with gardens, poultry etc.,” which rendered them “not fit for active service.”²³ Strathnairn had attempted to address this complacency by requesting the Horse Guards that a “large portion of men should be not married, but single”, but this had proven fruitless.²⁴ Unlike their counterparts in the Irish Constabulary, all Irish Coastguard Stations were under the charge of chief boatmen promoted from the ranks by 1862.²⁵

The Coastguard performed a number of Reserve and Auxiliary functions throughout the period. The Irish contribution to the First Naval Reserve in 1865 was disproportionately small, amounting to just 517 Irishmen around the country. This represented just 2.69 per cent of the 19,226 Naval Reservists in the United Kingdom as a whole in that year.²⁶ 60 per cent of this number was accounted for in the three largest port cities of Dublin, Belfast, and Cork. Income from bounties was also occasionally supplemented by volunteering for one of the other auxiliary forces, such as the Naval Coast Volunteers or the Militia, which resulted in a “double bounty,” a practice that the government was keen to root out.²⁷

²³ Rose to Major General Campbell, 29 Dec., 1867. BL, Rose Papers, ADD MS 42,824, 219-29. Original emphasis.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Symes, ‘The Coastguard in Ireland’, 205.

²⁶ *Army and Navy Gazette*, 16 Sept., 1865.

²⁷ For details of an attempt to avoid the payment of double bounties see – Col. Smyth to Abercorn, 11 Jan. 1867. NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 1732.

Table 7.2. Size of the Naval Reserve in Ireland - 31 Aug., 1865

Belfast	67
Cork	195
Dublin	114
Dundalk	1
Galway	28
Limerick	26
Londonderry	2
Newry	4
Sligo	3
Tralee	2
Waterford	21
Wexford	54
Total	517

Source: *Army and Navy Gazette*, 16 Sept., 1865

The 1856 Coast-Guard Service Act specifically mandated that, “The Officers of the Coast Guard shall be deemed and taken to be Officers by whom the Royal Naval Coast Volunteers (the “Third Reserve”) may be instructed, trained, and exercised, and to whose Command such Volunteers may be made subject.”²⁸ The sentiment was more fully explained by the Commodore Controller-General of the Coast Guard, to demonstrate the broader utility of the force. He noted in 1866 that

It is part of the duty of the Coast Guard Force to hold itself in readiness to aid the Civil Power whenever the Police are not in sufficient strength, and good service is thus constantly rendered by them. Their intelligence, their intimate knowledge of the roads, and of the inhabitants, have rendered them on such occasions invaluable auxiliaries.²⁹

This was strengthened by the First Lord of the Admiralty, the Duke of Somerset, who concurred and noted that they were “an excellent force to tell what may be going on in their several districts and if the magistrates would communicate with their inspectors and officers they would get reliable information.”³⁰ For his part, the Lord Lieutenant agreed by acknowledging that they could “give us valuable

²⁸ Coast-Guard Service Act (1856), Cap 83, Vic. 17. Article 10.

²⁹ Rear-Admiral A.P. Ryder, *Remarks on the Three Naval Reserves of Seamen - with Suggestions for Their Improvement* (London: Harrison & Sons, St. Martin’s Lane, 1866), 20. Caird Library, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich. NML/199/82.

³⁰ Somerset to Wodehouse, 16 Oct., 1865. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4034, 97-8.

aid, and I shall take care that the Constabulary and Police communicate with them.”³¹

Dealing with the Fenians

During an insurrection, however, the isolated and lightly manned Coastguard stations were acknowledged to be a necessary liability. Baron Strathnairn had noted that the Martello towers which housed some of the small detachments were “too weak for defence or proper vigilance, and the masonry neither resists or supports modern artillery.”³² Somerset was equally quick to concede that while they were “not capable of resisting an outbreak”, he nonetheless hoped that the intelligence functions were enough to guarantee their central role to Ireland’s defence.³³ Nowhere was this centrality better displayed than the issue of their annual training. Up until mid-1865, gunnery and seamanship training had proceeded as normal, but by the following year the Irish Executive deemed the established protocol of removing naval reservists to RN ships in Irish waters to participate in ordnance and seamanship training to be too risky.³⁴ Their withdrawal from their usual stations “will leave the coasts unwatched for a time, and might encourage the Fenians to make some attempt.”³⁵ Like the training schedule of the Irish Militia, the Admiralty was happy to postpone the training to meet the exigencies of short-term security requirements.³⁶

Beyond its responsibilities facing out to sea, the Coastguard extended its jurisdictional responsibility inland. In an attempt to clarify the numerous overlapping jurisdictions, the Admiralty sought legal opinions from the British and Irish Law Officers. One of the questions submitted by the LCA queried the limits of their power, specifically whether the Coastguard were “legally empowered to stop and search carts in the neighbourhood of the sea coast, which they may suspect of containing arms or munitions of war for the parties

³¹ Wodehouse to Somerset, 20 Oct., 1865. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4034, 124-6.

³² Rose to Duke of Cambridge, 30 Dec., 1867. BL, Rose Papers. ADD MS 42,824, 121.

³³ Somerset to Wodehouse, 16 Oct., 1865. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4034, 97-8.

³⁴ For accounts of the Kerry division Coastguard’s transfer to Queenstown, see *Kerry Evening Post*, 7 Jun., & 9 Aug., 1865.

³⁵ Wodehouse to Somerset, 20 Apr., 1866. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4046, 16.

³⁶ Somerset to Wodehouse, 24 Apr., 1866. Bodl., Kim. MS Eng C 4046, 51-2.

called Fenians.”³⁷ The Law Officers in Westminster maintained that, under reasonable grounds for suspicion, they could stop and search carts in coastal areas. However, unlike the standard line of demarcation at sea (the three mile rule), no specific distance was set as to the limitations of this power inland. Even more problematically, the Irish Law Officers, Lawson and Sullivan, opined that the “the recent proclamation of Cork County will materially aid” any action of this kind.³⁸ This lack of formal clarification as to any restrictions on the Coastguards’ power merely reinforced the jurisdictional blurring between its civil and military responsibilities.

To partially address some of the immediate security problems of the isolated Coastguard positions, Rear-Admiral A.P. Ryder wrote to the Admiralty to highlight the fact that there “are no mounted Coast Guard in Ireland and that the assistance of a mounted force would be very desirable.”³⁹ These mounted Coastguards, who originally only existed at English divisions, would be a critical link between isolated stations and major urban centres.⁴⁰ This matter was particularly pressing in the light of intelligence received indicating that “an attempt was to be made in order to seize the arms of the different watch-houses in the division two nights since.” Given that “several of the stations [were] short handed”, he requested that the Executive would “cause one mounted police to be attached temporarily to such officers in command of Queenstown, Youghal, Wexford, Waterford, Kinsale, and Skibereen Divisions.”⁴¹ This request can be viewed, therefore, as a positive attempt to address the obvious infrastructural and communication deficiencies and better implement Rose’s initial integrated plan. The outcome of this request is unclear, but by 1868 only 72 stations listed Horse, Hired Horse, Horse and Car, or Patrol as their main means of conveyance

³⁷ Romaine (Secretary to the Admiralty) to Law Officers, 19 Sept., 1865. TNA, TS 25/1425. Enclosure in ADM 1/6574.

³⁸ James Lawson and Edward Sullivan, “Opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown – Ireland – as to the right of Cruizers to search vessels for arms or Munitions of War.” 19 Sept. 1865. TNA, HO 45/7799, 77.

³⁹ Rear-Admiral Ryder to LCA, 20 Sept., 1865. TNA, HO 45/7799, 66.

⁴⁰ Scarlett, *Shipminder: The Story of Her Majesty’s Coastguard*, 68.

⁴¹ Memorandum of Captian E Heathcote, 18 Sept., 1865. TNA, HO 45/7799, 67.

of important messages, suggesting no formalization of the link between mounted constabulary and the Coastguard.⁴²

The increased threat level in late 1865 saw the Coastguard take on a more prominent deterrent role, primarily achieved through the public drilling of its men. In reaction to the suspected landing of arms in Donegal, the *Freeman's Journal* noted that "The coastguards of the several stations [surrounding Killybegs] are being reviewed in presence of a large number of spectators."⁴³ The benefits to the loyal population of such martial demonstrations were recognized by the *Waterford Mail*, who that noted "the constant residence in any community of such men as the Coastguards, the Naval Brigade, or navy men, whose minds are imbued with such thorough feelings of loyalty, and who mix among the people, is like the little leaven, which leavens the whole lump."⁴⁴ However, isolated Coastguard stations could also prove to be a focal point for Fenian protest, rather than a solely a deterrent of Fenian action. At Clontarf, Fenians conspicuously attempted to intimidate the station by instructing the mob to "form four deep, and march past with almost military precision," giving the tower's occupant a foretaste of later Fenian raids on other stations.⁴⁵

With the RN heavily stretched at sea with naval counterinsurgency duties, some of its secondary functions were delegated to the Coastguard. In response to reports of unidentified ships signalling in Dublin Bay on approach to the Liffey, the commander of the Kingstown Coastguard ship wrote to Under Secretary Larcom to suggest that "for the present, and some time to come, there should always be one serviceable gunboat" stationed at the mouth of the Liffey.⁴⁶ This responsibility eventually rested with the Coastguard tender *Seamew*, which was stationed at the Pigeon House Fort from mid-March.⁴⁷ This issue was even more pressing along the west coast where the Coastguard was expected to assume the

⁴² Adm. Buckle (Queenstown) to Admiralty, 30 May, 1868. TNA, ADM 149/4.

⁴³ *Freeman's Journal*, 5 Oct., 1865. (Killybegs) *Freeman's Journal*, 18 Nov., 1865. *Freeman's Journal*, 6 Oct., 1865, (Dublin) 21 Apr., and 7 Jul., 1866 (Kingstown.)

⁴⁴ *Waterford Mail*, syndicated in *Munster Express*, 18 Nov., 1865.

⁴⁵ *Kerry Evening Post*, 10 May, 1865.

⁴⁶ Captain Miller (Kingstown Coastguard) to Larcom, 22-3 Mar., 1867 (date partially obscured). NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 1733, 5063.

⁴⁷ *Freeman's Journal*, 14 Mar., 1867.

role of policing of the Galway oyster beds against the “depredations committed at night by the fisherman,” because the gunboat assigned to the area was “on more important duty and cannot be spared.”⁴⁸ This left the policing of this important economic activity to the Coastguard cutter *King George*, which was sent “to give such assistance as it can afford.”⁴⁹

The only area within traditional Fenian historiography which highlights Coastguard action, rather than raids on Coastguard stations, is the treatment of the *Erin's Hope* expedition.⁵⁰ The transatlantic filibustering and gun-running attempt, which arrived a full two months after the abortive rising, intersected with the Coastguard on at least five occasions without direct confrontation, leading the captain to boast that he had “humbled coastguards and navy-men.”⁵¹ These claims demonstrate an implicit misunderstanding of the role of the Coastguard, whose goal was not to seize the ship or its crew, but rather to activate other branches of power to undertake the seizure at sea or on shore. Initial attempts to blame the Sligo and Kerry Coastguards were subsequently rebutted by the Admiralty on these grounds.⁵² The swift arrest of the crew shortly after landing came as a result of the Coastguard's actions, when its example of “messages spreading to all the neighbouring police stations” proved to be a textbook example of Rose's integrated defensive system.⁵³ That the filibusters had decided to scuttle the ship in the event of its capture by a “ship of war”, but to “nail their colours to the mast” and fight if intercepted by a “gunboat or revenue cutter” illustrates the Fenian perception of the different branches of Admiralty power.⁵⁴

The ability of the Coastguard to support other branches of state power was dependent on infrastructure. This was highlighted by the seemingly simple

⁴⁸ Naas to Frederick, 5 Mar., 1867. NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 1732, 4313.

⁴⁹ Frederick to Naas, 13 Mar., 1867. NAI, CSORP 1867. Box 1732, 4312.

⁵⁰ O'Mullane, *The Cruise of the 'Erin's Hope;' or "Gun-Running in '67.*; Pádraig Ó Concubhair, *The Fenians Were Dreadful Men: the 1867 Rising* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2011), 167–75; Steward and McGovern, *The Fenians: Irish Rebellion in the North Atlantic World, 1858-1876*, 166–78.

⁵¹ O'Mullane, *The Cruise of the 'Erin's Hope;' or "Gun-Running in '67.*, 31. The ship interacted with Coastguards at Donegal Bay, Sligo Bay, Blacksod Bay, Galley Head and Helvick Head.

⁵² Ó Concubhair, *The Fenians Were Dreadful Men*, 170.

⁵³ O'Mullane, *The Cruise of the 'Erin's Hope;' or "Gun-Running in '67.*, 26.

⁵⁴ O'Mullane, 10.

instruction from the Admiralty that, “when any suspicious vessels are seen off the coast they are to communicate in the most expeditious manner, by telegraph if possible, with you [in Cork].”⁵⁵ The expeditious nature of these communications, however, was severely hampered by the lack of a fully developed telegraph system. The Fenian attacks on Coastguard stations on land, and the inability to interdict the *Erin’s Hope* at sea, highlighted these deficiencies. In the aftermath of the rising, Admiral Buckle investigated the possibility of “establishing a system of signal and telegraph arrangements in Ireland.”⁵⁶ At his request, the Admiralty undertook a preliminary survey to establish the distance between each station and the nearest telegraphy office and the manner by which that distance was to be covered.

The results of that survey revealed that the Coastguard network was not as fully integrated into the defensive system as Rose had initially hoped. An analysis of the data returned to Admiral Buckle reveals that the average distance from station to telegraphy office was 10.9 miles nationwide. In some critical areas, such as the Skibereen division, this average distance was as low as 7.75 miles, but in more isolated areas, such as the Dingle and Kilrush divisions, the distances were more substantial (32^{1/3} and 32^{3/4} miles respectively). In the Kinsale division (where the average distance to telegraphy station was 13 miles), the unusual situation arose where the telegraphic cable ran adjacent to seven stations, but there were no accessible offices along the line. Even in Malahide, where there was a telegraphy office, it was not used because it was not deemed “remunerative”.⁵⁷ The isolated nature of the Coastguard stations that were attacked during the rising highlights their above-average distance from telegraphic communication capable of alerting the Executive to a landing or a broader invasion.⁵⁸ A close examination of the communication infrastructure of the Coastguard stations as it existed in 1897 reveals a very significant improvement in this well-established area of deficit. (See Map 7.1)

⁵⁵ Admiralty to Frederick, 2 Jul., 1867. TNA, ADM/1 6574.

⁵⁶ Full Report contained within correspondence of Adm. Buckle to Admiralty, 30 May, 1868. TNA, ADM 149/4, 367.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 368-74.

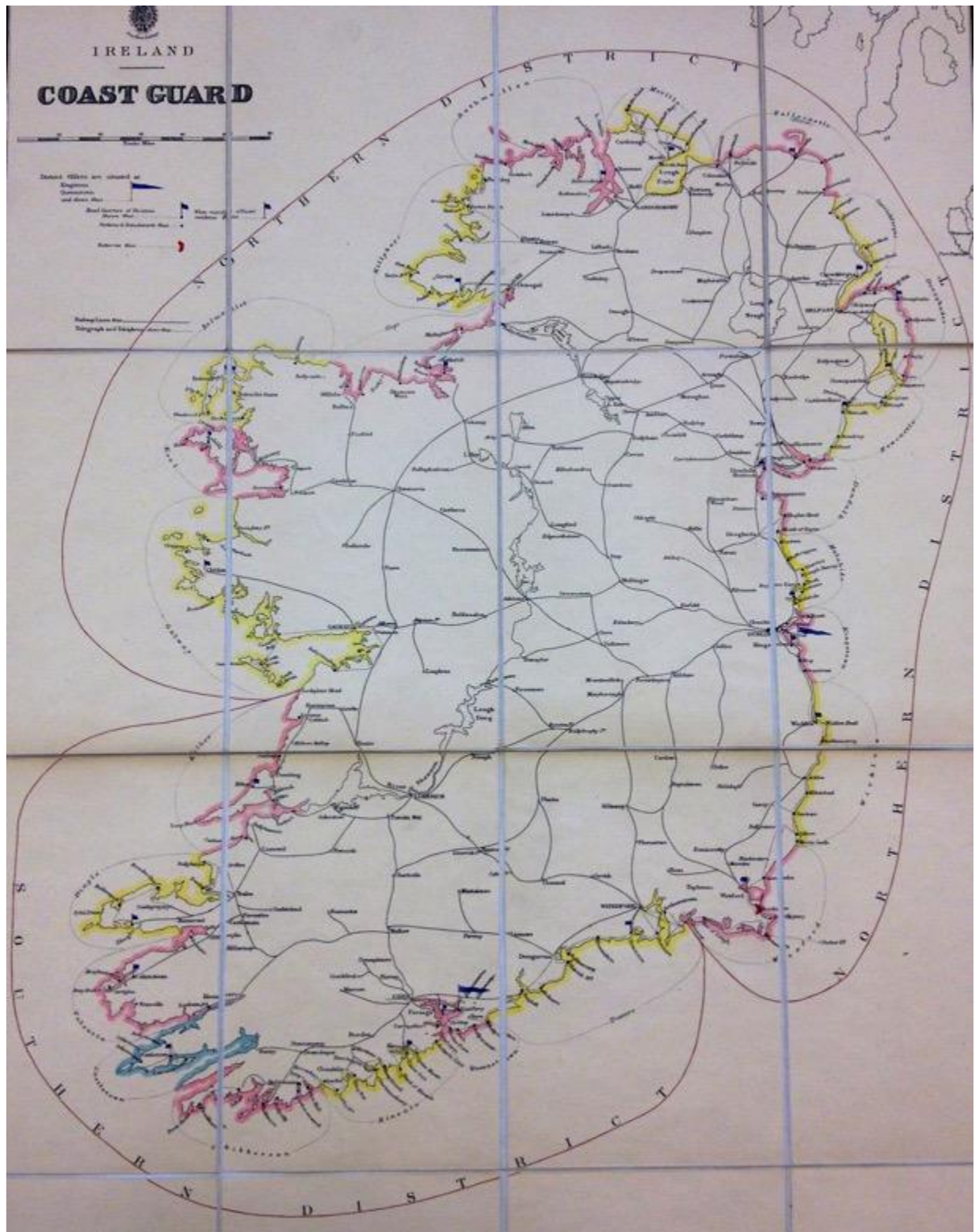
⁵⁸ (Kells – 14 miles, Knockadoon – 12 miles, Kilredane – 38, Kilbaha/Kilkee – 29 miles).

In the decade following the rising, new Coastguard stations that were erected assumed a far more fortified and military character, a recognition of the increasing strategic significance of the Coastguard and of its “seigniorial authority”.⁵⁹ The services provided by the Coastguard led new First Lord of the Admiralty, the Irish landowner Henry Lowry-Corry, to warn the government in the immediate aftermath of the rising that it was “most dangerous to diminish the strength” of either the Coastguard or the Royal Marines.⁶⁰ Although far from fully developed or fully integrated around the country, this judgment underlines the important contribution attributed to the Irish Coastguard in the Executive’s counterinsurgency activities in the 1860s.

⁵⁹ Mayne, ‘Fortification as an Element in the Design of Irish Coastguard Stations, 1867-1889’.

⁶⁰ Henry Lowry-Corry, “Navy Estimates”. HC Deb., 21 March 1867. Vol. 186, 341.

Map 7.1. Map of Irish Coastguard Districts and telegraph connections, 1897



Source: Rear Adm W.J.L. Wharton, 20 Apr., 1897
Caird Library, NMM, Greenwich. 6277-77 (42) GRE

Conclusion

This thesis set out to address the question of how the Irish Executive prepared for the long-promised Fenian rising and how they suppressed the rising that eventually took place in February and March of 1867. To achieve this goal two interrelated investigations were undertaken. Firstly, the thesis sought to gain a deeper understanding of the individual institutions involved in Irish defence, including those whose dense structures and opaque decision-making processes have rendered them difficult for historians to fully assess. Secondly, having gained a firmer foothold on the idiosyncratic nature of some of those institutions, it sought to probe the manner in which the two Irish Executives of different political hues in the late 1860s utilized and coordinated the resources of those disparate branches of power. What emerges throughout the dissertation is the picture of a vigorously led Executive working with colleagues in London and further afield to juggle the multiple, often competing, demands of 'Home' and 'Imperial' defence. The Executive's leaders in Dublin acted with such diligence and efficiency that their actions in Ireland served as a personal springboard for both Lords Lieutenant Wodehouse and Naas to enter the upper echelons of British government, though with different outcomes for each.

This thesis has consistently argued that the successful suppression of the rising was predicated on a gradual centralization and extension of the power of the state. Successive administrations identified defects in this power during the twenty years prior to the Fenian rising and attempted to systematically, though not definitively, address those deficiencies in both the Irish and imperial contexts. Despite the growing support for both the Irish and American branches of the Fenian movement, the lack of critical organizational capacity was, and continued to be, their Achilles' heel. The detailed but unglamorous bureaucratic cataloguing of administrative actions that contributed to the suppression of the Repeal and Young Ireland movements of the 1840s were dusted off two decades later. The contemporary imperial experiences of senior civil and military leaders in the Crimea and India, as well as the input of Canadian administrators and of Her Majesty's Consuls throughout the United States, meant that many of the plans needed only to be resurrected, adapted, and improved, rather than be invented from scratch. This provided the Executive with a buffer that allowed

them the time and energy to focus the available resources with a degree of celerity and cohesion that was impossible for their adversaries.

The thesis's title, "Defending Ireland from the Irish", was deliberately chosen to emphasise two critical aspects of the investigation. Firstly, by using the present participle, it suggests that the formulation of what we might now call 'defensive policy' was far from static, but rather was constantly evolving as new intelligence became available and new resources became available or were suddenly withdrawn. Secondly, in not emphasising a specific subject doing the 'defending', it hopes to reinforce the idea that multiple branches of state power were required to come together to cooperate as effectively as the context allowed to achieve the defensive goal of suppressing the Fenian rising. Whereas the common historiographic practice of analysing one specific branch of power over a sustained period provides a useful context, a holistic understanding of Irish defence is only possible from the multi-perspective approach adopted here. This approach allowed for a more comprehensive assessment of how the Executive managed the multiple branches of defensive power upon which it could draw, and also allowed for a deeper comparison of the approach of subsequent Executives. It also illustrated the degree to which many civil and military leaders considered Fenianism to pose a potentially existential threat to Irish security. Although this fear was subsequently downplayed, its persistence within the archival records is an unexpected outcome of this study.

The theoretical framework adopted, the intertwined considerations of Infrastructural Power, Counterinsurgency, and Transnationalism, helped to fully articulate the wide-ranging political, legal, civil, military and naval pressures that influenced the decision-making process of Executives from both parties and provided a lens through which useful and original research questions could be generated. They helped to illustrate the degree to which Ireland sat uncomfortably between the standard imperial practices, neither fully integrated with the British mainland, nor wholly capable of being governed and defended as a colony. A consideration of Infrastructural Power also facilitated a deeper interrogation of the effectiveness of defensive policy, interested not just in the

rhetorical flair of how politicians claimed they would address the looming crisis, but also assessing the degree to which those exertions of state power were 'made good' on the ground in isolated locations. The transnational lens helped to synthesise the partially overlapping imperial and transatlantic components of the Fenian threat, a methodological framework that is being employed with increasing fruitfulness by historians of nineteenth-century Ireland. Finally, framing events in terms of the theory and practices of COIN broadened the relevance of the trends identified within this specific setting, hoping thereby to make it more accessible to scholars in other contiguous fields.

One of the primary contributions of this thesis has been to rebalance the contemporary narrative and resulting historiographic trends that attributed the lion's share of the credit for the suppression of the rising to the Irish Constabulary. Other branches of state power, such as the Royal Marines or the Coastguard, are demonstrated to have played important roles in the suppression of Fenianism. The fact that those roles often focussed around inconspicuously facilitating the actions of other branches, rather than themselves dominating the headlines, should not diminish the importance of their contributions. The abundance of prudence evident in how both Liberal and Conservative Executives dealt with the Irish Militia further highlighted the degree to which an examination of deterrence, that which hasn't happened, can have potentially significant repercussions for historical judgments during this period. Similarly, the fact that the contingency plans that the Executive expected the Irish Constabulary would activate in the event of a nationwide rising were never fully implemented, and were only lightly tested in those areas where they were required, should be viewed as further evidence that the Fenian threat was generally considered to be potentially far more dangerous and pressing than Dublin Castle and Westminster were prepared to admit publicly.

By viewing the military and naval actions as dependent upon the suspension of *Habeas Corpus* in Ireland, this thesis also highlights the need to consider the shifting constitutional limitations that diminished during the extra-constitutional setting of an *etat de siège* and how this transition was managed by

the liberal governance in Westminster. As has been noted of Britain in 1848, the liberal state with its “parliament and elaborate legal system, [was able] to enforce its will, [...and ride] out the revolutionary wave with little rocking of the boat.”¹ The constitution was suspended again two decades later, with much the same goal – forcing potential Irish insurrectionists into the field on the government’s own terms. With fewer, but more powerful ships, a slightly diminished number of armed constabulary, and far fewer troops available than in 1848, the Executives of Wodehouse and Naas replaced the missing manpower with more efficient organization and wider infrastructural reach to achieve similar defensive ends. The Executives acted with a nimbleness of response that capitalized on the lessons learned in Ireland and around the empire to suppress the Fenians in a manner comprehensive enough to last generations into the future. Victory over the Fenians was far from pre-ordained. However, as Michael Hurst noted in the centenary year of the Fenian rising, “both the timely official anticipation of trouble and the subsequent humiliations of defeat and imprisonment produced a more sober and realistic mood at all levels of Fenian activity”, a view that this thesis affirms, with the caveat that the preparations undertaken were broader and more systematic than have been previously acknowledged.²

A number of limitations emerged in the drafting of this thesis that merit brief discussion. While the voices of Dukes, Earls, Lords Lieutenant, Chief and Under Secretaries, prominent political figures, and military commanders of all hues are present throughout, the subaltern voice is missing. In the Irish context, the opinions of local magistrates and justices of the peace are used, where possible, to assess the implementation of the Executive’s decisions. This revealed substantial variations of experience nationwide, but the voices of civilians below the level of magistrate remain generally unheard. A corresponding exploration of the ways in which those at the coalface of COIN in Ireland perceived these actions would undoubtedly add depth and texture to this exploration. The voices of the soldiers who composed the flying columns, the ‘ratings’ on ships patrolling

¹ Kinealy, *Repeal and Revolution*, 279.

² Michael Hurst, ‘Fenianism in the Context of World History’, *University Review* 4, no. 3 (December 1967): 276.

the Irish coast, the isolated Coastguard officers, the rank and file of the constabulary and police forces, and the ignored militiamen could all add significant weight to our understanding of the governance and defence of Ireland in this period, but in a manner that was beyond the scope of this investigation, if they exist at all within the archival record. Equally, an investigation of the day-to-day operations of Dublin Castle and the Irish Office in London, running in parallel to Patrick Joyce's examination of the Post Office and India Office, might further broaden our understanding of how the exertion state power was shaped by the bureaucracy through which it was required to percolate.³

Similarly, the voices of the Fenians themselves are heard relatively infrequently in the preceding pages. The fact that their voice doesn't protrude more obviously is the result of what seems to be a homogenized view of state power from the perspective of those subject to the flexing of that power. It appears that, in many ways, it mattered little to the Fenians whether they faced a soldier, a militiaman, a Constable, a 'Blue Jacket', or any other uniformed representative of the state. All were equally symbolic of the power of the state and therefore were not differentiated between by the Fenians, at least not in a manner that is consistently evident within the Fenian memoirs and newspaper coverage of the day. Now that the actions of the forces at the disposal of the Executive have been established more comprehensively, the current author would welcome a reciprocal examination of the personal papers of would-be revolutionaries to establish whether this homogenized view of state power is borne out in that context.

The successful suppression of the rising, however, was neither the end of the Fenian organization, nor the end of the Executive's concerns as to the threats it might potentially pose. In a common phrase of the period, the Executive felt that the "Irish snake is scotched but not dead."⁴ In the immediate aftermath of the rising, the government was slow to relinquish the increasingly centralized power it had accrued. The Executive revealed their continued concerns by

³ Joyce, *The State of Freedom*, 53–186.

⁴ Wodehouse to Duke of Somerset (Admiralty), 22 Apr., 1866. 12th Duke of Somerset Papers – Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies. D/RA/A/2A/57/10/1-222, 19-21.

maintaining the heightened securitization of Ireland well beyond March 1867. Whereas traditional Fenian historiography follows the Fenians, who shifted their efforts to mainland Britain, this discounts the government's sustained efforts in Ireland, without which the militarily enforced peace might have quickly degenerated. Under Secretary Larcom explained the phenomenon to Lord Lieutenant Abercorn more than three months after the rising when noting that

Things are, on the surface, quiet enough here – and the happy public begin to think Fenianism a thing of the past. It would be cruel to undeceive them, and our efforts must be, by vigilance, to keep the enforced calm which now prevails. How very far from that state our real condition is, God well knows.⁵

This was a thinly veiled tranquillity, maintained by continued military presence and civil vigilance, rather than an outright victory over the Fenians. A parallel examination of how the civil powers in Ireland coordinated the efforts of the disparate branches of state power in the relatively peaceful decade or so between the Fenian rising and the Land War would certainly deepen our understanding of the governance and defence of Ireland under the Act of Union, a process towards which this thesis has sought to contribute.

⁵ Larcom to Abercorn. 20 Jun. 1867. PRONI, Abercorn Papers. T/2541/VR/168.

Appendices

Appendix A - Strategic Concentration Memorandum.¹

Secret and Confidential - Constabulary Office, Dublin Castle.
1 January, 1866.

1. At the present period, when excitement and disaffection exist amongst a certain class of the people of the Country calling themselves Fenians, I consider it desirable to convey to the Officers my instructions as to the steps that should be taken by them in the event of any likelihood of an attack being made upon the Constabulary in their barracks. To provide against any such attempt, County Inspectors should secretly consult with their Officers and Constables in charge of stations, in order to the adoption of such precautions as will secure their barracks from surprise.
2. If the Police perform their duties efficiently, they will have the confidence and respect of the well-disposed in their neighbourhood, which will enable them to obtain an accurate knowledge of everything that is going on in their respective districts; and immediately upon their discovering any intention of hostility towards them, they should lose no time in communicating it to their Officer, and the nearest Magistrates.
3. The Officers of districts are held responsible that each man has forty rounds of ball ammunition, spare caps in proportion, and a spare nipple. Should they find men deficient in any of the forgoing, they should acquaint their County Inspector of it. The County Inspector may supply each Sub-Inspector with ten rounds of spare ammunition to each man in his district, with a full proportion of caps.
4. Each County Inspector, according to the state of his County, will judge the expediency of prohibiting any men from sleeping out of barracks, and of requiring the men to keep their arms and ammunition in their sleeping apartments instead of in the day-room below. It is also for him to consider the propriety of preventing any man from proceeding on duty without his arms, or of allowing more than one half of the men at any station to attend divine worship at the same time, which arrangement may render it unnecessary for the men to go their armed.
5. It is difficult, in anticipation of insurrection to prescribe rules for the distribution of the whole Force, as such must, in a great measure, be influenced by the nature and extent of the outbreak, and the particular circumstances of each County; much reliance is therefore placed on the local knowledge and experience of County Inspectors. In some counties for example, or portions of Counties, it may be desirable to leave the men at their present stations, under the order of the Magistrates, to defend their own barracks, or to assist in the defence of any house in the vicinity

¹ Secret and Confidential Memorandum of Inspector General John Stewart Wood
1 Jan., 1866. NLI, Mayo Papers, MS 43,887/2.

more capable of resistance than their own. In other cases, it may be expedient to unite two or more of the small parties together, or lastly to concentrate the men at the headquarters of their district. Each of these schemes possesses, most probably advantages and disadvantages peculiar to itself.

6. But whatever may be the course adopted by the County Inspector, he is to bear in mind that the constabulary being a local force, instituted for local objects, it is of importance that they should not be withdrawn from their sub-districts, or assembled in larger bodies than may be absolutely necessary for their own safety, and consequently for the eventual security of the district to which they belong. While, however, it is admitted that the presence of a few resolute policemen, well armed and provisioned, may have the effect of inspiring the timid with confidence, and enabling the magistrates to organize resistance in particular localities, it must not be concealed that by such an arrangement, which can only be considered as defensive, the force might be exposed in numerous instances to be cut off in detail, and thereby be prevented from undertaking any offensive operations, or affording due protection to the inhabitants.
7. Should the County Inspector decide upon withdrawing all the men from the outposts and concentrating them at the Head Quarters of their respective districts, prudence will dictate the propriety of causing the most distant parties to move first; which falling back upon those nearer the point of concentration, will gather strength on their way, so that no very small number of men will be exposed to a long march.
8. In the event of the County Inspector finding the district Head Quarters to be in an inconvenient or indefensible situation, he may substitute for the Sub-Inspector's station, any other more central or desirable point for the assembly of the men of the district; a station for example, in the vicinity of troops or contiguous to a railway station.
9. Should it be unsafe to circulate the orders for these for these purposes by means of mounted orderlies, trusty civilians should be employed and paid for the trouble of conveying the County Inspector's written directions, which ought to be forwarded in duplicate to each post by separate messengers.
10. No officer or constable in charge of a station is to withdraw his party from its post, except in a case of the most manifest and pressing necessity, without the authority of the County Inspector. When the men are required to abandon their station, they will carry with them all their ammunition; and such of it as cannot be contained in their pouches, must be put into the handcuff cases, and the handcuffs can be appended to the bayonet belt. The spare caps can be deposited in the tin cases supplied for that purpose.
11. Cars may be hired for the conveyance of the men's bedding and necessaries, and such other articles under the charge as can be conveniently removed, and the abandoned barracks after being deprived of the Constabulary badge, will be left to the care of respectable military or Constabulary pensioners, or, failing them, of trustworthy civilians.
12. The County Inspector will send the earliest intimation of his intention to concentrate the force to the Lieutenant of the County, the nearest

- Magistrates, and to all authorities at the heads of departments connected with the Government, such as the officer commanding the troops, the staff officers of military pensioners, Coast Guard, &c, that may be residing in his county; and these intimations should be renewed, if possible, by each officer or Head Constable in charge at the several district head quarters.
13. Should any party in executing the above movements find it impossible without extreme danger to arrive at the required destination, the person in charge will hasten its junction to any other detachment of the force, or of the troops, with which its communication may be open, or to any town or village, remarkable for the loyalty of its inhabitants, or, with permission, take advantage of a gentleman's house, the inmates of which appear determined to offer resistance.
 14. In the event of actual insurrection, but *not* otherwise, the Constabulary will instantly seize upon all arms in the hands of suspected persons, as well as the arms and ammunition in the possession of dealers therein, and giving them receipts for the same, will deliver up the arms and powder so seized, to the Sub-Inspector, who will afterwards obey such instructions respecting their disposal as he may receive from the Magistrates.
 15. When any party of Constabulary are on their march to the head quarters of their district for concentration, notices should be issued to all military and Constabulary pensioners to repair to their relative districts, where it will be for the Sub-Inspectors, under the direction of the Magistrates, to have such of the Constabulary pensioners sworn in as special constables as can be fully depended on, and are fit for active service.
 16. Should sufficient accommodation for the district force be refused in any military barrack or other public building, the Sub-Inspector may hire a house for the purpose, which should be of such a construction and in such a situation (*detached from other buildings*, and with a good supply of water), as may be capable of defence, the means of which must be promptly improved by the zeal and intelligence of the officer, who is, under no circumstances, to allow the dispersion of the men in private lodgings.
 17. In the mean time Sub-Inspectors might be usefully employed in considering the best and readiest manner, in case of necessity, of strengthening the barrack, in which their district force would be assembled, or in selecting, in their own minds, the house best adapted for occupation, should their present barrack be too small or otherwise unfit for the accommodation of their men.
 18. For all these purposes, it may be necessary that the County Inspector should consult with each Sub-Inspector personally, under an injunction to secrecy, so that he may clearly understand the part allotted to him in case of need. But where it is intended that parties shall remain within their sub-districts, it is not expedient that the Constables in charge of them should receive further instructions than that, in the event of tumult, they are to place themselves under the orders of the neighbouring Magistrates.
 19. One of the most important points which the County Inspector will have to consider, is the selection of, on an average, six or seven of those towns or villages most easy of defence, capable of affording the necessary provisions, accessible to a railway station, and at such a distance from one

another that communication could be kept up between them without much difficulty, and to which the loyal inhabitants would proceed, either for organization and resistance, or for protection, until the arrival of troops. Each district force must preserve its communication with its contiguous posts, either by strong patrols or by means of trustworthy messengers, and while it is impossible to anticipate how far adjacent Sub-Inspectors may have it in their power to form, with the auxiliaries, offensive combinations, it will be their duty to establish such a system of strong patrols, as will ensure the best information of what is passing between their quarters, and infuse, by their frequent presence, confidence throughout the surrounding country.

20. It is of the utmost consequence that when the time arrives for a well matured plan of offensive or defensive movements to be executed, it should be carried out with decision and rapidity; for any vacillation would tend to produce failure; and it is not less important to judge correctly when the period has arrived for the concentration of the men at certain posts; as *too sensitive alarm* is as censurable as *apathetic confidence*.
21. Should the circumstances arise to justify the foregoing measures being adopted to check or subdue any insurrectionary movement, then will be seen whether officers possess the necessary qualifications of forethought, judgment, and decision for such a critical moment; and it will also prove the loyalty of the men, in whom I have every dependence; and the discipline of the Forces, which has never been questioned. Officers and men may rest assured that such of them as shall be distinguished by zeal and valour in the suppression of tumult and in the vindication of law and order, will not fail to be amply rewarded, and brought to the notice of His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant, for special mark of favour.

J Stewart Wood,
Inspector General.

Post Script:

You will be pleased at once to acknowledge the receipt of this communication, which you will regard as strictly private, and will maturely consider, but will not at present show or communicate to any person whatever without my permission.

Sealed copies will be hereafter sent to you for officers in charge of districts, to be opened only in case of absolute necessity; but no copies or extracts are to be taken.

And finally, all the copies, whether opened or not, are to be returned in a double cover to me.

Appendix B - Memorandum as to Special Constables and the Powers and Duties of Magistrates²

As in the present state of the country the enrolment of Special Constables may be desirable, the Government is anxious to call the attention of the Magistrates to the provisions of the Statute regulating the appointment of such officers, which provides for their enrolment under certain contingencies, viz.:(2 & 3 Wm. IV. Cap. 108) the reasonable apprehension of riot, tumult, or insurrection being disposed to by credible persons, and further, the opinion of the Justices that the Police, Military, and other regular force in the country, are not sufficient for present protection of persons and property. It will thus be observed that the Justices are declared the tribunal to decide upon the necessity for Special Constables.

The Magistrates will careful consider whether such necessity does exist before they proceed to act under the provisions of the statute; but, in case of its adoption, His Excellency will be ready to afford to them such assistance and advice as they may require.

Powers and Duties of Magistrates

The attention of the Magistracy is further called to the following summary of their powers and duties under the Acts, called "The White Boy Acts," 15 & 16 Geo. III., c 21 and 1 & 2 Wm. IV., c 44, the provisions of which will be found very valuable in the present disturbances, and apply to all disturbed districts.

1. All persons armed with fire-arms, or any other weapon, or appearing in any disguise, or wearing any unusual uniform or badge, or assuming any name or denomination not usually assumed by ordinary persons in their lawful occasions, who shall assemble, or who shall appear, alone or with others by day or night, are guilty of a high misdemeanour, subjecting them to penal servitude, imprisonment, and whipping.
2. All persons who assemble, and unlawfully compel, or by force of threats attempt to compel any one to quite his dwelling or employment, who shall maliciously assault any dwelling-house, or who shall break into any house or outhouse or cause any door to be opened by threats, or shall carry off any horse or mule, or any gun or other weapon, money, or other property or shall by threats cause same to be given up to them, are equally guilty, and liable to the same punishment.
3. Any person who shall write, post, publish, or give any notice, letter, or message, exciting, or tending to excite, any riot or unlawful assembly, or combination, or threatening any violence to person or property, or demanding arms, ammunition, money, or other property, or requiring ay person to quit any employment, is liable to the same punishment.

² Memorandum as to Special Constables and the Powers and Duties of Magistrates. Enclosure in, Chief Secretary Naas to Lord Abercorn, 11 Mar., 1867. PRONI, Abercorn Papers. T2541/VR/85/8.

4. All persons aiding and abetting others in the commission of any of the above offences are equally guilty, and liable to the punishments above mentioned.
5. All persons who by drum, horn, fire, shouting, or any signal, excite, or promote, or attempt to excite or promote such unlawful meetings, are also guilty of a high misdemeanour.
6. Any person who, by force or threats, unlawfully impose on or tender to any person any oath or solemn engagement are guilty of a grave misdemeanour, and are liable to whipping and imprisonment.
7. All Magistrates and Constables are empowered and bound to apprehend, disperse, and oppose all persons so engaged, and may call upon and command all persons who are not disabled by age or infirmity to assist them in so doing; and are fully indemnified for happening to kill, maim, or hurt any person in discharging such duty.
8. Any two Magistrates having reasonable cause to suspect any person to be guilty of any such unlawful rising, assembling, or appearing as above mentioned, or of having been at such unlawful assembly, or of intending so to be, may and are required to summon before them any such person, and bind him over in his own recognizance to appear at the next Assizes, and to be of good behaviour in the mean time; and in case of refusal such Magistrates have power to commit such person to gaol.
9. Every Magistrate has authority to summon any person within his jurisdiction whom he thinks capable of giving material evidence as to any such offence, and examine him or her on oath, and bind such person in recognizance to appear and give evidence, and on refusal to answer or to enter into recognizance to commit such person to Gaol.

By His Excellency's Command.
Naas

Appendix C – Cavalry Distribution in Ireland, February 1867

	Corps	Station	How Accommodated (Barracks/Hut/Tent)	No of Troops or companies at each station (Det=Detachment)	Officers	present including recruits	sick and absent	total	Horses present including officers charges
Dublin Division	4DG	Newbridge	B	8	28	487	64	551	359
	5DG	Newbridge (HQ)	BH	3	16	225	33	258	159
	5DG	Curragh	H	1	2	75		75	75
	5DG	Carlow	B	1	2	53	1	54	49
	5DG	Longford	B	2	2	106		106	89
	5DG	Castlebar	B	1	2	43	1	44	44
	2D	Royal	B	6	16	318	87	405	287
	2D	Arbour Hill	B			55		55	47
	2D	Portobello	BH	2	3	80		80	79
	9L	Island Bridge	B	8	24	477	72	549	419
	10H	Dundalk (HQ)	BH	5	9	363	83	446	281
	10H	Belfast	BH	1	2	50	7	57	48
	10H	Belturbert	B	1	2	50	6	56	47
	10H	Athlone	B	1	2	37	3	40	36
Cork Division									
	6DG	Cahir (HQ)	BH	3	17	235	50	285	181
	6DG	Limerick	B	2	5	80		80	80
	6DG	Carrick-on-Suir	B?	Det	1	26		26	26
	6DG	Waterford	B	1	2	47		47	44
	6DG	Clonmel	B	2	5	87		87	80
	12L	Cork (HQ)	B	3	10	205	66	271	189
	12L	Ballincollig	B?	2	7	138	6	144	125
	12L	Bandon	B	Det	1	19		19	15
	12L	Skibbereen	TB	1	2	38	2	40	34
12L	Fermoy	B	2	4	72		72	73	
Total Cavalry and Horses available:								3847	2866

D – Dragons, DG – Dragoon Guard, L – Lancer, H - Hussars

Appendix D - Militia Returns for Ireland (1860-65)¹

Year	Establishment			Total Establishment	Present			Absent									Wanting to Complete		
	Officers	NCO	Privates		Officers	NCO	Privates	Officers with Leave	Officers without Leave	NCO with Leave	NCO without Leave	Privates with Leave	Privates without Leave	% Officers with Leave	% NCO without Leave	% Privates without Leave	Officers	NCO	Privates
1860	833	1540	20519	22892	510	1114	9887	117	24	3	17	34	1430	2.88%	1.10%	7.0%	182	418	9468
1861	833	1540	20519	22892	499	1305	12473	103	20	3	15	19	1291	2.40%	0.97%	6.3%	221	219	6703
1862	1195	2219	29749	33163	687	1968	22079	158	36	6	41	97	3093	3.01%	1.85%	10.4%	315	217	4494
1863	1201	1262	30710	33173	679	1173	25332	135	27	3	5	291	2164	2.25%	0.40%	7.0%	360	82	2955
1864	1201	1262	30710	33173	643	1166	25169	149	29	9	11	352	2572	2.41%	0.87%	8.4%	380	79	2648
1865	1201	1262	30710	33173	652	1147	22479	145	13	3	2	293	1896	1.08%	0.16%	6.2%	391	113	6050

¹ 'Militia. Return Showing the Establishment of Each Regiment of Militia in the United Kingdom, the Numbers Present, Absent, and Wanting to Complete at Each Training, for the Years 1859, 1860, 1861, and 1862', Parliamentary Papers, 1863; 'Militia Regiments (Establishment, &c.) Return Showing the Establishment of Each Regiment of Militia in the United Kingdom; the Numbers Present, Absent, and Wanting to Complete for the Training of 1863', Parliamentary Papers, 1864; 'Militia Regiments (Establishment). Return Showing the Establishment of Each Regiment of Militia in the United Kingdom; the Numbers Present, Absent, and Wanting to Complete for the Training of 1864', Parliamentary Papers, 1865; 'Militia Regiments. Return Showing the Training Establishment of Each Regiment of Militia in the United Kingdom; the Numbers Present, Absent, and Wanting to Complete for the Training of 1865', Parliamentary Papers, 1866.

Appendix E – Overlap of Civil and Military Positions within the Irish Militia²

Regiment	Name of Colonel/Hon Colonel	Other Civil Positions of Colonel	Other Civil Positions of other Officers	# of Officers Late of Reg Service
Antrim	Marquis of Donegal	GCH, ADC to the Queen Victoria	W/erner MP for Armagh 1868-73 Cons	4
Antrim Artillery	Lord John Chichester		2 PPs	3
Armagh	Hon. Henry William Caulfield			5
Carlow	John H. Keogh	late Capt 30th Foot		3
Cavan	Earl of Bective	JP	1 other PPs	3
Clare	Crofton Moore Vandeleur	DL P (MP for Clare 1859-75 Conservative)	3 DLS & 7 PPs, 1 other MP (W. Stacpoole MP for Ennis)	3
Cork, North	William St Ledger Alcock	JP	3 other PPs	5
Cork, South	Hon Henry Bernard	MP for County Cork 1863-8	5 other PPs	6
Cork City Artillery	Earl of Bandon	DL P	1 DL & 3 other PPs	4
Cork West Artillery	Earl of Shannon	DL P	Lieut-Col W. H. White Hedges (Earl of Bantry 1868)	4
Donegal	James Viscount Hamilton		Lieut-Col Claud Hamilton MP-Tyrone 1839-74 Cons, 2 PPs	3
Donegal Artillery	Sir James Stewart	Baronet		1
Down North	Marquis of Londonderry	KP Lieutenant of the County	1 other PPs	2
Down South	Marquis of Downshire	KP	Earl of Hillsborough 1st Capt of other PPs DL	2
Dublin City	David Charles La Roche	DL P High Sheriff of Dublin 1843	1 DL & 3 other PPs	5
Dublin City Artillery	Hon Robert French Hancock			1
Dublin County	Earl of Meath	DL, Lord of Wicklow-1869 ADC Queen Victoria	1 other PPs	7
Fermanagh	Earl of Enniskillen, Willoughby		1 other PPs & 2 DLS	4
Galway	Marquis of Clanricarde	Lord Lieutnant of the County	Lieut-Col Earl of Clancarty & 2 other PPs	2
Kerry	Right Hon Henry Arthur Herbert	MP Kerry 1847-66, Lord of Kerry, Chief Sec 1857-8	Capt Daniel O'Connell MP for Ralee 1853-63, DL	3
Kildare	Marquis of Kildare		Lieut-Col Marquis of Drogheda	2
Kilkenny	Right Hon W. F. Tighe	Lord Lieutnant of Kilkenny	4 other PPs	5
King's County	Earl of Rosse	Lord Lieutnant of the County	Lieut-Col Bernard, DL & PPs	6
Leitrim	Henry theophilus Clements	JP	1 other PPs	5
Limerick	William Monsell	MP for County Limerick 1847-74		4
Limerick Artillery	Viscount Gort	Former MP and Limerick Mayor, Irish Lord		1
Londonderry L.I.	William Fitzwilliam Lennox Conyngham	DL P	2 other PPs	4
Longford	Lord Annaly	MP-Kidderminster, Junior Lord of Treasury 1862-66	3 other PPs	4
Louth	Lord Bellew	Lord Lieutnant of the County	1 other PPs	4
Mayo, North	Charles Knox	DL P	1 other PPs	2
Mayo, South	Marquis of Sligo	DL P	1 other PPs	3
Meath	Marquis of Headford			3
Monaghan	Charles Powell Leslie	MP for Monaghan 1842-71		4
Queen's County	Francis Plunkett Dunne	DL P MP for Queen's County	1 other PPs	4
Roscommon	Fitzstephen French	DL & MP for Roscommon 1832-74 Whig		2
Sligo	Francis Arthur Knox Gore	Lord Lieutnant of the County	3 other PPs	2
Tipperary Artillery	Earl of Donoughmore	DL P, Privy Council 1858	1 other PPs	8
Tipperary L.I.	Viscount Ismore	Lord Lieutnant of the County	2 other PPs	6
Tyrone	Sir James Matthew Stronge	DL P	1 other PPs	7
Tyrone Artillery	Ynyr Henry Burges			6
Waterford Artillery	Right Hon Lord Stuart de Decies		Capt Esmonde MP-Waterford 1852-76 Liberal, DL P	4
Westmeath	Fulke Greville	MP for Longford 1852-69	Lieut-Col Earl of Granard	3
Wexford	Lord Carew, Robert Shapland	Lord Lieutnant of Wexford	2 DLS & 2 PPs	4
Wicklow	Sir Ralph Howard	DL P	1 PPs & 1 PPs	2

Total 65

² Compiled from Hart, *Hart's Army List 1865*.

Appendix F - Return of Men by Militia Regiments who were reported as connected with Fenianism. 23 April, 1866.

Regiment	Number Reported	Discharged	Not yet Disposed of	Remarks
Antrim Rifles	1	1		Permanent Staff
Carlow	100		100	
Cork North	1	1		
Cork South	1	1		
Cork West	3	3		
Donegal Infantry	1	1		
Down North	2	2		1 Permanent Staff
Down South	2	2		
Dublin County	1	1		
Dublin City Infantry	3	3		
Kildare	1	1		Permanent Staff
Kilkenny	2	2		
Limerick Artillery	2	2		Permanent Staff
Louth	5	5		1 Permanent Staff
Mayo North	9	8	1	
Mayo South	5	3	2	
Meath	1		1	Permanent Staff
Sligo	1	1		
Tipperary I.I.	5	4	1	
Tipperary Artillery	10	8	2	
Tyrone Infantry	1	1		
Tyrone Artillery	1	1		
Wexford	1	1		

*As reported by Sub Inspector Studdart, but one of them have been arrested because Mr Studdart could not be particular
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