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Context and Demonizing the I.R.A.

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Title: Context and Demonizing the I.R.A.

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Abstract. This article questions a consensus that the I.R.A. is largely responsible for the recent suspension of Northern Ireland's home-rule government by the United Kingdom.

The recent suspension of Northern Ireland's home-rule government by the United Kingdom has been largely blamed on the Irish Republican Army (I.R.A.). Blameworthy I.R.A. behaviors have included engaging in intelligence activities that could support terrorist attacks, terrorist training of politico-military groups outside of Northern Ireland, e.g., in Colombia, and maintaining a personnel and materiel infrastructure that could support a re-engagement of terrorist operations.

These blameworthy behaviors have been usually placed in the context that all other participating organizations in home-rule government are not maintaining capabilities for terrorist operations. This, of course, may not be the case and is an intelligence question to be determined by collected data, theory, and logic among other epistemological tools. Even if it is the case, however, the I.R.A. may be justified in maintaining terrorist capability in that the main Protestant paramilitary/terrorist groups have no role in home-rule government and, thus, no formal commitment to a cease-fire, let alone the forswearing of terrorist capability.

As to the suspension of home-rule government, then, blaming the I.R.A. makes sense in one context but in another only if courting suicidal behavior--the terrorism of the self--is a highly valued enterprise. (See Cairns, E., & Darby, J, (1998). *The conflict in Northern Ireland: Causes, consequences, and controls*. *American Psychologist*, 53, 754-760; Hamilton, A. (1995). *Policing Northern Ireland: Current Issues*. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 18, 233-242; Heskin, K. (1994). *Terrorism in Ireland: The past and the future*. *Irish Journal of Psychology*, 15, 469-479; Lavery, B. (October 31, 2002). *I.R.A. breaks off all contact with disarmament*. *The New York Times*, p. A5.) (Keywords: Irish Republican Army, Northern Ireland, Terrorism.)

Health Security and the Role of Psychology

Abstract. This article describes the very significant role that applied psychology has to play in minimizing contemporary health risks with security implications.

The World Health Organization recently identified the 10 major health risks accounting for over 20 million deaths annually. What is intriguing about these risks is the significant psychological aspect of prevention and minimization strategies.

Lack of food is not a global problem but one that is local and regional in scope. A different mindset among the "haves" about allocating resources to the "have nots" could largely address this risk. Unsafe sex, smoking, alcohol, high cholesterol, and obesity are largely behavioral consequences of beliefs, attitudes, opinions, and preferences that could be modified to generate different behavioral consequences. High blood pressure, unsafe water/sanitation, nutritional deficiencies, and indoor smoke have direct and/or indirect psychological components subject to an applied psychology of both the "haves" and the "have nots."

Political psychology often focuses on more immediately obvious security issues such as war making, national security decision making, candidate preferences, so-called political ideation, and the like. The role of health as a salient security issue--so apparent in the residua of the AIDS pandemic--suggests a further example of political psychology's import. (See Agency puts hunger No. 1 on list of world's top health risks. (October 31, 2002). *The New York Times*, p. A11; Birkimer, J. C., & Bledsoe, L. K. (1999). Covert self-reinforcers, fear of consequences, and health behavior. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 139, 654-664; Treasure, D. C., Lox, C. L., & Lawton, B. R. (1998). Determinants of physical activity in a sedentary, obese female population. *Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology*, 20, 218-224; Winfield, E. B., & Whaley, A. L. (2002). A comprehensive test of the Health Belief Model in the prediction of condom use among African American college students. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 28, 330-346.) (Keywords: Security, World Health Organization .)