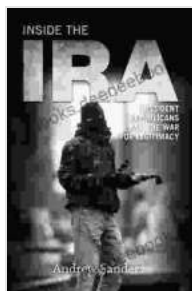


Dissident Republicans and the War for Legitimacy: A Comprehensive Examination of the Dissident Republican Movement

The dissident republican movement in Northern Ireland is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that has emerged in the aftermath of the Good Friday Agreement. This article provides a comprehensive examination of the dissident republican movement, exploring its history, motivations, and the challenges it poses to the peace process. It also discusses the ideological and operational differences between the various dissident republican groups, and assesses their current threat level.



Inside the IRA: Dissident Republicans and the War for Legitimacy by Andrew Sanders

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 4577 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 284 pages



Historical Context

The origins of the dissident republican movement can be traced back to the split within the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) in 1997. A group of dissidents, opposed to the PIRA's ceasefire and support for the Good

Friday Agreement, broke away and formed the Real Irish Republican Army (RIRA). In the years that followed, other dissident republican groups emerged, including the Continuity Irish Republican Army (CIRA) and Oglagh na hEireann (ONH).

Dissident republicans believe that the Good Friday Agreement was a betrayal of the Irish Republican cause. They argue that the agreement failed to deliver a united Ireland and that it has left Northern Ireland under British control. They also believe that the peace process has been accompanied by a process of "normalization" that has diluted Irish republicanism and eroded support for armed struggle.

Motivations and Objectives

The primary objective of dissident republicans is to bring about a united Ireland through armed struggle. They view themselves as the legitimate inheritors of the Irish Republican Army tradition, and they believe that they are fighting for the same cause as those who fought in the Easter Rising of 1916.

Dissident republicans also have a number of other motivations, including:

- To oppose the British presence in Northern Ireland
- To defend Irish Republican prisoners
- To promote Irish language and culture
- To create a socialist republic in Ireland

Ideological and Operational Differences

There are a number of ideological and operational differences between the various dissident republican groups. Some of the key differences include:

- **RIRA:** The RIRA is the largest and most active dissident republican group. It is committed to armed struggle and has carried out a number of attacks against British targets in Northern Ireland and England. The RIRA is also strongly opposed to the Good Friday Agreement.
- **CIRA:** The CIRA is a smaller dissident republican group that is also committed to armed struggle. However, the CIRA has been less active than the RIRA in recent years. The CIRA is also less opposed to the Good Friday Agreement than the RIRA.
- **ONH:** ONH is a small dissident republican group that is committed to political and military action. ONH does not believe that armed struggle is the only way to achieve a united Ireland. ONH is also more supportive of the Good Friday Agreement than the RIRA and CIRA.

Current Threat Level

The dissident republican movement remains a significant threat to the peace process in Northern Ireland. The groups are small and relatively weak, but they are capable of carrying out sporadic attacks. The threat from dissident republicans is likely to continue in the foreseeable future, as they remain opposed to the Good Friday Agreement and committed to armed struggle.

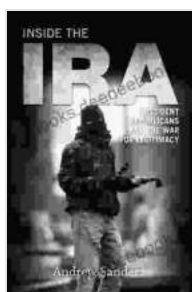
The British government has taken a number of steps to address the threat from dissident republicans, including:

- Increasing security measures in Northern Ireland

- Targeting dissident republican groups with arrests and prosecutions
- Working with the Irish government to address the underlying causes of dissident republican activity

The dissident republican movement is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that poses a significant threat to the peace process in Northern Ireland. The groups are small and relatively weak, but they are capable of carrying out sporadic attacks. The threat from dissident republicans is likely to continue in the foreseeable future, as they remain opposed to the Good Friday Agreement and committed to armed struggle.

The British government has taken a number of steps to address the threat from dissident republicans, but it is important to note that there is no easy solution to this problem. The only way to fully address the threat from dissident republicans is to address the underlying causes of their activity, including the legacy of the Troubles, the political and economic divide in Northern Ireland, and the lack of a united Ireland.



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