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## **‘Peace in Our Time’: Constructing parallels between Britain’s failure to appease Hitler and British policy towards Republican dissidents in Northern Ireland**

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**Abstract:** *The appeasement of aggressors has been an element of British foreign policy since the latter half of the nineteenth century, rising to a position of dominance in the late 1930s. Too great a reliance upon appeasement, however, allowed Hitler to renege on the deal brokered by British Prime Minister Chamberlain with regard to Czechoslovakia, and led to the outbreak of the Second World War. Notwithstanding the numerous differences between British external policy towards Nazi Germany and internal policy towards Northern Ireland, this article draws parallels between these two situations and contends that the strategic appeasement of terrorists has formed an important element of British policy in Northern Ireland during the peace process of 1994 to 1998. In some respects, Republican dissidents in Northern Ireland, with their upsurge in violence in 2009, assumed a position similar to that of Hitler in 1938. As in the earlier case, which undermined the peace of Europe, Republican dissidents threatened to undermine the peace process in Northern Ireland. Thus, both in Germany in 1938 and Northern Ireland in 2009, the key to resolving conflict through appeasement has ultimately rested in the willingness of those advocating violence to renounce violence in exchange for legitimate concessions. The lesson that can be drawn from the failure to appease Hitler and made applicable in Northern Ireland is not that appeasement is fundamentally flawed, as President Roosevelt advocated in 1940, but rather, that it needs to remain in its proper place as one of a number of components of government policy aimed at preventing ongoing aggression. It should not become an objective in itself.*