

World News Roundup

IRA

Man charged

'Experts' to assess IRA

DUBLIN, Sept 23, (AP): Britain on Tuesday unveiled a new expert panel to investigate Irish Republican Army activities as a man was charged with possession of a trove of IRA weapons, underscoring the tensions that threaten to tear apart Northern Ireland's unity government after eight years of Catholic-Protestant cooperation.



Davison

Power-sharing, a central achievement of two decades of peacemaking, is at risk because of a killing that police and other authorities have blamed on the IRA. The underground organization, which killed nearly 1,800 people during a failed 1970-1997 campaign to force Northern Ireland out of the United Kingdom, was supposed to fade into history as part of the 2007 creation of a coalition combining former enemies from the British Protestant majority and the IRA-linked Sinn Fein party.

But while the IRA officially disarmed and renounced violence in 2005, splinter groups have continued to kill — and now, for the first time, the IRA itself stands accused of using lethal force in retaliation.

Police commanders say IRA members last month ambushed and shot to death an expelled comrade, Kevin McGuigan, in revenge for his own alleged killing in May of a senior IRA figure, **Jock Davison**. McGuigan, who was shot in the arms and legs by the IRA more than a decade ago in a so-called "punishment" attack, had expressed bitterness toward Davison but denied involvement.

Report

The three-member expert group is supposed to report to government leaders by mid-October on the state of the IRA today, including the open question of whether commanders ordered or permitted the McGuigan hit. If so, it would be the first confirmed killing by the dominant branch of the IRA, called the Provisionals, since the 2007 resurrection of power-sharing.

The experts also are tasked with assessing the current structure and activities of a half-dozen other paramilitary forces, including IRA splinter groups and anti-Catholic gangs. None of these is affiliated to any party in Northern Ireland's government, making their violence much less politically explosive.

Even when international weapons inspectors announced the Provisional IRA's total disarmament in 2005, analysts broadly agreed that the IRA retained firearms for defensive or community-intimidation purposes. McGuigan's Aug 12 killing, if confirmed to be an IRA attack, would offer the first concrete evidence of this.

The past decade of occasional bomb and gun attacks committed by breakaway factions already has demonstrated that IRA leaders lost control of portions of their arsenal, most importantly caches of the Czech-made plastic explosive Semtex, before it could surrender the weaponry.

Discovery

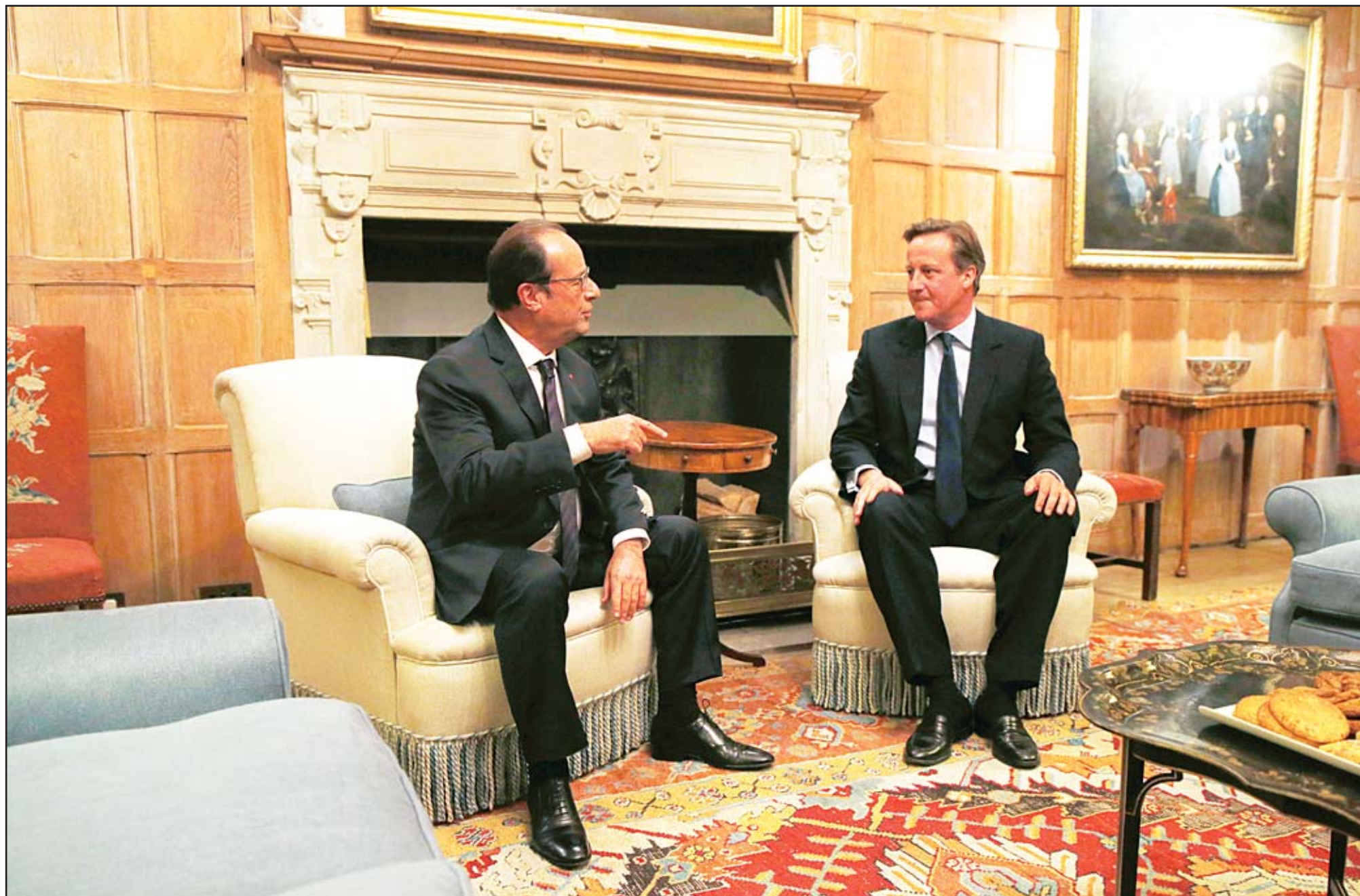
A man was arraigned in a Belfast court Tuesday on charges of possessing about a pound (half a kilogram) of Semtex, two detonators, two handguns and more than 200 rounds of ammunition for use by an unspecified IRA faction. Kevin Nolan, 45, had been arrested Sunday in England following the weapons discovery in a house in Catholic west Belfast, a primary power base for the Provisional IRA and its rival offshoots.

Nolan offered no plea at Belfast Magistrates Court. He did offer a clenched fist salute to friends and family in the visitors gallery as police led him from the dock.

Northern Ireland's government — an unwieldy five-party coalition — has become increasingly dysfunctional as Protestant ministers abandon their posts in protest over what they consider Sinn Fein's failure to deliver IRA disarmament. But they have yet to withdraw outright and trigger its destruction.

Politicians from the major Protestant-backed party, the Democratic Unionists, say they want guarantees that the IRA will cease to exist — or new rules for ousting Sinn Fein from government if the IRA is implicated in more bloodshed. Neither is considered likely.

In event of collapse, the British government in London would resume direct control of Northern Ireland, the system in place from 1972 to 1999 and again from 2002 to 2007.



Britain's Prime Minister David Cameron (right) and French President Francois Hollande pose for the media prior to talks at Chequers, near Wendover, England, on Sept 22. (AP)

Britain



Britain's Prince William, Honorary Air Commandant of Royal Air Force Coningsby, prepares for a flight in a RAF chipmunk plane while visiting the RAF station in Coningsby England on Sept 22. The air base is the home to the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, of which the prince is patron. (AP)

Britain

Barring hotspots' cuts deaths: Installing barriers, safety nets and other restrictions at notorious suicide hotspots like bridges, cliffs and railways could cut the number of suicides at these sites by more than 90 percent, according to research published on Wednesday.

In a large study covering known hotspots around the world, researchers found that other measures such as putting up signs and crisis telephones to encourage people to seek help also appear to significantly reduce the number of deaths.

Suicide is currently the second leading cause of death among 15- to 29 year-olds, according to World Health Organization (WHO) data. Across all age groups worldwide, around 800,000 people kill themselves each year.

Some of the world's most notorious suicide sites include London's "Tube" subway system, the Eiffel Tower in Paris, the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco and the Prince Edward Viaduct in Toronto. (RTRS)

'No drug charges': British police say disgraced former House of Lords member **John Sewel** will not face drug charges because of insufficient evidence against him.

Sewel resigned from the House of Lords in July after he was photographed cavorting with two prostitutes and allegedly snorting cocaine. Police launched an investigation and searched his apartment after the photographs were published by the Sun on Sunday newspaper.

A police statement Tuesday said the investigation has now been closed and no further action will be taken.

The married 69-year-old Sewel stepped down and apologized for the "pain and embarrassment" he caused. He was a deputy speaker of the House of Lords and chaired its Privileges and Conduct Committee before he stepped down. (AP)

Hollande opens high school:

French President **Francois Hollande** opened London's second French high school on Tuesday, which will be named after Winston Churchill.

"I am very proud that there will be one more in London," Hollande said. "It is good, just and right that the high school will bear the name of Winston Churchill," he added outside the building, which since September has taught 457 students from kindergarten to the

Islington remains solid Labour

Corbyn's borough has wealth, poverty

From spies to smartphones

Britain's Aga set for another new chapter

LONDON, Sept 23, (RTRS): Islington, the north London neighbourhood where Labour's new hard-left leader, Jeremy Corbyn, has his powerbase is also home to the "champagne socialists" who flourished under the party's former hierarchy when it ran Britain.

Islington remains solid Labour, although the party languishes in opposition after two national election defeats, and not so long ago the red flag flew over the town hall.

For 32 years Corbyn has been member of parliament for ethnically mixed Islington North, one of the borough's two constituencies.

Once a thoroughly working class borough, Islington is today also home to the wealthy "chattering classes" who inhabit the elegant Georgian squares and spacious Victorian villas of its smart southern districts.

These people have an entry in the British political lexicon as "Islington socialists", shorthand for a rich north London class which backs fashionable left-wing causes and votes Labour, traditionally the party of the working class.

At the last general election in May, "Vote Labour" posters appeared in the windows of multi-million-pound Islington houses with expensive cars parked outside.

Thrived

These voters thrived when Tony Blair, a former Islington resident, won three elections for Labour between 1997 and 2005 and pursued pro-business policies. But their ideas are deeply at odds with Corbyn's old-school socialism.

This month's election of Corbyn, 66, as leader of the party and the British opposition highlights the difference between his relatively deprived constituency, and more affluent Islington South, where Blair's New Labour project emerged in the 1990s.

"There has quite clearly been a division between what one could describe as the old traditional socialist left, which Corbyn obviously is reflective of," said Mark Wheeler, professor of political communications at London Metropolitan University, which lies in Corbyn's electoral district.

The term gentrification was coined with Islington in mind and while the middle class has moved into parts of Corbyn's constituency, much working class housing and deprivation remains.

But in the south of the borough, prices are soaring for the privately-owned homes that often stand check-

by-jowl with sprawling public housing estates.

Nick Rosen, a journalist who got to know Corbyn when they were both left-wing activists in the 1970s, said the Labour leader detected hypocrisy among some of his richer constituents.

Rosen recalled an interview he did with Corbyn in the 1980s. "He said he was very angry with those middle class people in his constituency who would oppose public housing developments on the grounds of the environment but actually were worried about having black kids living next door," Rosen said.

Rich and poor don't mix much in the borough, which has London's second worst level of child poverty and where teenage gang violence is a serious problem.

In the last few months, a youth was fatally stabbed while riding his bicycle while another was killed with a machete in a park where mothers take their babies and children play.

Youth workers say poor youngsters see a world they can never be part of.

members of the royal family and Prime Minister David Cameron.

It struggled as demand was hit during the global financial crisis, but has recently returned to form with modern, more efficient versions of the cooker, and hopes to build on its heritage by exploiting Middleby's global network.

"The fundamental design of the Aga has always been its virtue but behind the front and the look is now a completely different product," Aga Rangemaster CEO William McGrath told Reuters, before he steps down as part of the sale.

"The design makes it iconic, the radiant heat makes it iconic but how it is delivered is something that has changed from generation to generation, from solid fuel, through oil and gas to electric and now programmable electric."

The heat, created by the continuously burning stove, made the old Aga distinctive, but it also drew its critics.

Great in winter when it could heat half the house, one owner complained that you "sweat buckets while boiling an egg" in summer. For many the cost of fuel can also prove prohibitive while envi-

ronmental groups criticised the impact of the traditional stoves.

Modern versions can be easily switched on and off, including with a smartphone, while smaller models have been created to appeal to city dwellers.

Around 80 percent of those sold today are the newer, more efficient designs that have been launched since 2011, and are offered in a variety of colours from rose, pewter and lemon to pistachio and aubergine.

"You can get all the virtues of an Aga in a 60 centimetre package, which is something we'd expect over the next five to 10 years to become a more and more appreciable part of the business," said McGrath. The largest version of the stove can be 2.5 times that size.

McGrath said the new owner was also drawn to its heritage — a company with a history that reads like a spy novel.

Created in 1922, the first Aga was invented by Swedish Nobel Prize winning physicist Gustaf Dalen who, confined to his home after being blinded in an accident, witnessed his wife struggling to cook on their old range.

Man" in a local inn, The Angel.

Closer to the political centre, Blair and his then ally Gordon Brown reached one of the most famous deals in modern British politics at the Granita restaurant on Upper Street.

Over fish and a bottle of white wine, they agreed who would lead New Labour, a reformed, centre-left version of the people's party which ruled from 1997 till 2010.

"They were two people who clearly had stuff to discuss," recalled Granita's former owner, Vikki Leffman. "They didn't want to be bothered."

Granita closed in 2002, the space occupied by a Tex-Mex joint called Desperados, and Upper Street remains nicknamed "Supper Street".

Traditional Islington pubs have been replaced with family-friendly gourmet establishments. Houses once packed with tenants in bedsits have returned to single-family use and are worth huge sums due to an influx of bankers, lawyers and other top-earners.

The smart shops and cafes of Upper Street, Islington's main shopping thoroughfare, are not for them.

"There is a lot in Islington that is not perceived as being for the young people who we work with," said Alex Elliott, operations manager at the charity Urban Hope. "If people are surrounded by aspirational things that they've got no way of enjoying themselves, then inevitably that causes some tensions."

Charlie Allen, an Upper Street tailor whose clients include royalty, sports stars and entertainers, works with Islington Giving, another charity supporting local youths.

"There's a high suicide rate among men, poor men at that, who have just given up, because there's a lot of affluence, and I think that's got something to do with that," he said. "They feel as though they have under-achieved."

Islington has always attracted radicals. In 1381, leaders of the Peasants' Revolt held a rally there and in 1790 Tom Paine began writing "Rights of

final grade.

The school aims to relieve pressure on the 100-year-old LycEe FranAais Charles de Gaulle, which teaches 4,000 students from kindergarten to graduation, catering to demand from Britain's large French population. (AP)

'More words for snow': Snow joke — the Scots language has more words



Sewel



Churchill

for snow than Inuit languages, a total of 421 including "snaw", "sneels" and "skelf", researchers in Glasgow said Wednesday.

Other terms used to describe the white stuff that often coats Scotland's landscape during winter include "flindrikin" (a light snow shower), "feefle" (swirling snow) and "spitters" (small flakes of snow).

The finding came from researchers at Glasgow University who are compiling the first ever thesaurus cataloguing every recorded word in the tongue that has been spoken in Scotland for hundreds of years.

Part of it is being put online for the first time Wednesday, starting with the sections covering snow and sport. The latter includes 369 words relating to the game of marbles. (AFP)