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AMERICAN IRISH NEWSLETTER

Political Education Committee of the American Ireland Education Foundation

Volume 27, Number 3

March 2002

PSNI Keeps Control of Omagh

THE NORTHERN Ireland Police Board decided Feb. 8 to leave operational control of the investigation into the 1998 Omagh bombing in the hands of the Police Service of Northern Ireland. This move is a victory for PSNI Chief Constable **Ronnie Flanagan**.

In her scathing report into the PSNI's handling of the investigation of the bombing, Police Ombudsman **Nuala O'Loan** recommended that an officer from outside the PSNI lead the investigation. Flanagan rejected the proposal and said that the man who has been in charge, PSNI Superintendent **Brian McArthur**, would remain in charge. A second officer from England will soon work with him.

Some of the families have reservations about the direction of the investigation. **Michael Gallagher**, whose son was one of the 29 people killed in the outrage, said: "The Board failed to address the core issues raised by the families, such as the poor quality of the original inquiry, which included the full exploration of intelligence before the bomb, and the actual mechanism of dealing with the investigation. It has been a difficult task for the Board, and it has mapped a course for future investigation. The test for that will be whether or not there will be convictions."

The officer the Board will appoint will oversee all matters but will not have operational control. The officer will: examine the resource and skill levels needed to satisfactorily conclude the investigation; undertake a quality assurance role, particularly regarding the internal police probe that formed the basis of O'Loan's report; monitor progress in the investigation; enhance working practices with the Gardai in relation to the Omagh bomb inquiry; identify obstacles to progress; offer strategic guidance to the Board; and report to the Board at agreed intervals.

Murder Must Be Investigated

ON FEB. 12, THE thirteenth anniversary of lawyer Patrick Finucane's murder, non-governmental organizations around the world called on the British government to fully investigate the UDA murder.

Britain has resisted repeated calls for a public judicial inquiry into all aspects of the lawyer's killing, including allegations of collusion and cover-up. Calls for an inquiry have come from the UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers, international and domestic non-governmental organizations, the Finucane family, the House of Representatives, the Irish government, and more than 2,000 lawyers worldwide.

Britain has obligations in national and international law to investigate this case thoroughly and impartially, including under the United Nations Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-legal, Arbitrary, and Summary Executions (1989), Article 11 of which states:

"In cases in which the established investigative procedures are inadequate because of lack of expertise or impartiality, because of the importance of the matter or because of the apparent existence of a pattern of abuse, and in cases where there are complaints from the family of the victim about these inadequacies or other substantial reasons, governments shall pursue investigations through an independent commission of inquiry or similar procedure. Members of such a commission shall be chosen for their recognized impartiality, competence, and independence as individuals. In particular, they shall be independent of any institution, agency or person that may be the subject of the inquiry. The commission shall have the authority to obtain all information necessary to the inquiry and shall conduct the inquiry as provided for under these Principles."

William Stobie, a key witness in connection with the case, was murdered in Dec., and other key witnesses are in fear for their lives. Vital evidence has already disappeared. Organizations are concerned that the longer the government deliberately delays, the greater the risk that the future public inquiry will be hampered (*See Action Request, Page 8*).

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Our View: Bigots Are Accountable

THE STATE Department's Richard Haass told a gathering in New York City Jan. 9 that the Irish peace process, for which he is the Bush Administration's point man, is doing well, thank you very much. He backed the claim with statistics (See story, Page 5) that suggested a balanced checkbook is the best guarantee of peace.

Haass said that the peace process is not complete, there remain obstacles, nothing is perfect....He even implied the British bore responsibility for some of the North's problems, but he laid blame for the conflict at the feet of the "two tribes."

His several claims that the Irish natives were learning to play together would have brought a tear to an imperialist's eye. Ironically, as he argued that a new paradigm is taking shape in Ireland--that is, Catholics are not victims of social injustices to the degree they used to be because economic prosperity is everybody's goal--he reinforced the old one: two tribes at war. How can Haass mold Ireland's government in the likeness of the Bush Administration and the FBI if he does not grasp the past?

Nationalists have consistently sought a democratic society. Loyalists, on the other hand, suffer from British-induced delusions of privilege and inflict this mental illness on nationalists. Loyalists are fighting a British war.

Haass suggested we try to feel for loyalists as they lose the totems of privilege--flags, emblems, employment discrimination, and so on. Loyalists deserve our sympathy because they are no longer sure of their place in the reupholstered Northern Ireland. Loyalists are picking on teachers, postmen, and children because they're confused.

Alas, we live in the land of talk therapy, where everyone is a victim and nobody is responsible for the evil he commits. Really, Mr. Haass. In post 9/11 America, we, too, are ready for a paradigm shift. Shift that one. Loyalist murderers deserve no sympathy.

Peace Process Update

January 8

DURING a House of Commons debate on legislation extending the decommissioning deadline, UUP leader and First Minister **David Trimble** demands that IRA disarmament be linked directly to further moves on the dismantling of British army bases in republican areas. He says: "If you fail to apply pressure, I will, in the timing and manner of my choosing, put pressure on." Loyalists resume attacking schoolgirls and parents outside Holy Cross Primary School in north Belfast. Rioting ensues (See Action Request, Page 8).

January 9

In its New Year address, the IRA challenges Britain to redress its "refusal...to confront...loyalist violence, bring about a new beginning to policing, and [redress its] unwillingness to fulfil obligations...." The IRA wants Britain "take the necessary steps to deliver real and meaningful change."

January 10

A loyalist gang armed with crowbars damages cars at Our Lady of Mercy Girls' Secondary School in north Belfast.

January 12

After the UDA murders a Catholic postal worker, it says postal workers and schoolteachers are legitimate targets. **Billy Hutchinson**, an Assembly member for the UVF-linked Progressive Unionist Party, says it is "time for loyalism to think where it [is] going and where one or two people could drag loyalism." Irish Prime Minister **Bertie Ahern** calls on the Northern Ireland Police Service to track down loyalists. "The figures speak for themselves," he says. "According to official figures produced by the Police Service of Northern Ireland, two-thirds of [shootings and violent incidents in north Belfast] were generated by loyalist groups. The statistics also show there have been few or no arrests. That is a worrying situation, and I am sure that the

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From the North: Police Board's Decisions Are British Business as Usual

By Robert Heatley, *co-founder of the campaign for Democracy, a predominantly Protestant organization, Belfast, Northern Ireland*

AS ALWAYS, **Ian Knox's** cartoon in the Feb. 11 *Irish News* said it all.

He was commenting on the outcome of the two-day deliberations of the lately installed Police Board, which had just undergone its second and biggest test to date. It had adjudicated between the PSNI/RUC's chief constable and the policing ombudsman, who had produced contradictory reactions to the police investigation into the Aug., 1998 Omagh bombing. The chief constable had said the RUC/PSNI was doing an adequate job on the investigation; the ombudsman said quite the contrary and recommended someone outside the RUC investigate the atrocity [*See Jan. Newsletter*].

Knox's cartoon shows UUP diehard apologist **John Taylor**, now Lord Kilclooney, exclaiming through a microphone, "Our man [Chief Constable **Sir Ronnie Flanagan**] won!" On the other side of the drawing stands the SDLP's **Alex Attwood** speaking through a microphone and insisting, "Our man [Ombudsman **Nuala O'Loan**] won!"

The Board decided to let the RUC/PSNI continue to lead the investigation after two days' strenuous haggling.

With this convoluted adjudication on the Flanagan-O'Loan controversy, the Board failed its second test; and the SDLP had been pressured into making its second retreat from the Patten report model for the future of policing.

Patten had made it clear that the new insignia for the remodeled police service be free of political and constitutional symbols. Nevertheless, the SDLP representatives on the Board agreed to ditch that recommendation. They are "post-nationalists," according to themselves.

The British crown emerged phoenix-like in the new police insignia. That had been the SDLP's first Board retreat.

The second had been the SDLP's imprimatur on a report that contained aspersions on the ombudsman's inquiry into the PSNI/RUC's investigation into the Omagh bombing. The Board has been in action for several months, but the number of retreats is piling up fast.

The SDLP has gotten itself into this pickle because it was more interested in a party-political gain at the expense of Sinn Fein than it was in the merits of the cases. Republicans had pointed out to the SDLP that the legislation that had created the parameters within which the Board operates was defective because it was a deviation from what the Patten report had assessed to be imperative.

Even if this Board were to find the PSNI/RUC culpable on any occasion (an unlikely event), it would not possess the power to have its proposals implemented. Accountability, in terms of getting the police to accept Board demands, stops at the chief constable and NIO proconsul **John Reid**, who retain power to disregard or modify to suit their agenda. A clear-cut finding on any matter that infringes on a British interest will not happen, given the composition of this Board.

The SDLP has been suckered into an arrangement in which the NIO, the UUP, and the DUP are engaged in a process of retrenchment from both the Mitchell Agreement and the Patten report. These parties are clawing back from undertakings that have the potential to undermine unionist hegemony in the North. It is just not possible for a colony to be democratic.

Let us take an early indication as to

how their strategy of retrenchment is intended to proceed. At a meeting in Belfast recently, Flanagan, by implication, exhorted Sinn Fein to emulate the SDLP by putting its head into the noose and joining the Police Board. Satisfied with how that body had performed up to date and its failure to make a clear-cut decision on his performance, he had decided to bring forward the date of his retirement. In the heat of the argument, he had postponed it.

Now the Board contains a big contingent of NIO-appointed "independents" chosen on a Catholic-Protestant—not nationalist-unionist—basis. This is a deft ploy by which the NIO is embedding sectarianism into the system it is patching up. It is bent on getting for that project a Belfast Castle Catholic element, in replication of what the British once had in Dublin Castle, to buttress British rule there.

It is not surprising, therefore, to find one of the NIO's appointees, a **Tom Kelly**, at the same meeting parroting Flanagan's call for SF to "come on board the new policing structures."

However it is not up to the Board to decide if and when the Patten reforms will be implemented. It is the bounden duty of the British government alone to put them in place now in their full integrity.

One last thought in all of this: The families of the victims of the Omagh bombing are not in the least bit satisfied with either the chief constable's response to the ombudsman's report or with the twaddle emanating from the Police Board. They still want an independent judicial public inquiry into the whole matter.

Newsbits

THE FAMILY of Gervaise McKerr, whom the RUC shot dead in 1982 in one of a series of shoot to kill incidents, has been granted leave in the High Court to apply for Judicial Review against Northern Ireland Secretary of State **John Reid** for his failure to provide an effective investigation into McKerr's death. Lawyer for the family **Peter Madden** of Madden and Finucane says, "This case is the first of many which will test the failure of the British government to provide proper public inquiries into the deaths of hundreds of people killed by British security forces. The European Court of Human Rights ruled last May that the current legal process for public inquiry (the coroner's inquest) was in violation of Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights (the right to life). Even though this judgement was delivered in May of last year, so far the British government has not told any of the families how they intend to comply with the ruling. It is clear to us that the only chance the McKerr family has of receiving the type of effective investigation that the European Court has said they are entitled to is for an independent judicial public inquiry to be established immediately." (*Madden and Finucane Solicitors* 2/6/02)

More than 300 people are homeless as a result of sectarian intimidation in the North, according to the latest official figures. As of Dec. 2001, 344 individuals are on the Housing Executive's waiting list because loyalists intimidated them from their homes. (*RM Dist.* 1/27/02)

Relatives of the victims of the Bloody Sunday shootings reacted emotionally to the first showing of a new movie about British troops' massacre of 14 Derry civilians almost 30 years ago. The 1,000-strong audience at the

screening of *Bloody Sunday* in Derry included city leaders, actors, and Sinn Fein MP **Martin McGuinness**. The evocative film uses a fly-on-the-wall style to show events in Derry on Jan. 30, 1972 and does not disguise the horror and shock of the Bloody Sunday killings. **Jimmy Nesbitt**, who plays Ivan Cooper, said the audience's reaction was very important to him. A northern Protestant, Nesbitt said making the film had been a "humbling" experience. [*The film, which premiered at the Sundance Festival in Utah on Jan. 15, won the best world cinema award at the festival.*] (*RM Dist.* 1/8/02)

New statistics have revealed that in connection with almost 100 paramilitary murders in the past three years, only one person has been convicted. Sinn Fein says the figures prove that nothing had changed within a force that was "rife with agents" while the SDLP says it is evident that a more "pro-active" approach was required. Sinn Fein has rejected a fresh call from US special adviser **Richard Haass** for Sinn Fein to nominate members onto the Policing Board. (*RM Dist.* 1/17/02)

Belfast coroner **John Leckey** is instructing his office to begin legal proceedings against the RUC (now the PSNI) for failing to produce documents for the inquest into the RUC's killing in 1992 of IRA volunteer **Pearse Jordan**. The inquest into Jordan's killing has been repeatedly adjourned since it was first brought before the Coroner's Court in Jan. 1995. It reopened last week for a preliminary hearing at which it was disclosed that the RUC have submitted just one file on the Jordan killing as evidence. With the inquest proper due to be heard next month, the coroner's office is now undertaking legal action

against the RUC. Branding the RUC's refusal to submit its documents to the court as "a disgrace," Leckey said the refusal was all the more surprising given that he made a written request for the material and that the RUC had given him a written assurance that all documents would be disclosed. Last year, the European Court of Human Rights ruled against the British government in respect of the Jordan killing. (*RM Dist.* 1/15/02)

The work of American Irish activists caused a MacBride Principles repeal bill withdrawn Jan. 22 in Florida. Senator **Debby Sanderson** said she had introduced the bill (S1160) "as a matter of routine procedural courtesy for a State Administrator." However, the senator's office was flooded with letters, emails, faxes, and phone calls calling for her to drop the bill. Angry activists demanded to know why Florida would want to repeal a bill that imposed anti-discrimination restrictions on US companies in Northern Ireland. American Irish leaders have commended Sanderson for withdrawing this bill, after learning of its implications on Catholics in Northern Ireland (*See Action Request, Page 8*). (*IAUC* 1/24/02)

Speculation is mounting that British forces colluded in the death of a loyalist who might have had information about the UDA murder of a Catholic postal worker. Weekend reports have indicated **Stephen McCullough** had offered to provide information to British forces about the murder. It is understood that the PSNI did not ask McCullough the murder but interviewed him drink driving. He reportedly stormed out of the police station, only to be found dead on the Cavehill in north Belfast just a few hours later. A couple in the park discovered his body. (*RM Dist.* 1/22/02)

Haass: Catholics and Protestants Must Embrace Common Future

Excerpts from Richard Haass's Jan. 9 speech, *New Realities in Northern Ireland*, to the National Committee on American Foreign Policy in New York City

I WANT to highlight the success of the peace process and to explore the idea that a new paradigm is taking shape in Northern Ireland. This paradigm demands that we look beyond how we understood the past and forces us to identify new challenges and responsibilities facing all who care about Northern Ireland.

Considerable distance has been traveled since the people of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland voted for the Mitchell Agreement in 1998.

We have witnessed the IRA's first act of decommissioning in its 80-year history, the stabilization of the Northern Ireland Assembly as a cross-community political institution, and the establishment of a new police service in Northern Ireland. None of these is a perfect accomplishment. Nonetheless, each of these steps marks solid progress and strengthens the foundation for a new society.

Decommissioning paved the way for movement in another area: the stabilization of devolved government in Northern Ireland. For much of last year, several core elements of the Agreement's governing institutions—the Assembly, the Executive, and the North-South Ministerial Council—were operating at reduced capacity or under a continuous threat of suspension.

During their first week in office, First Minister **David Trimble** and Deputy First Minister **Mark Durkan** presented the Executive's new Program for Government. This is a document that the ministers from the UUP, SDLP, Sinn Féin, and DUP prepared by working together.

Equally important as decommissioning has been the launch of the new Police Service of Northern Ireland. On Nov.

5, the first recruits to this police force—half Catholic for the first time—began their training. Two days later, the new Policing Board held its first meeting. For all the controversy it created, the Police Ombudsman report on the Omagh bombing demonstrated that the new policing structures have transparent and independent mechanisms to hold the police accountable for their actions. [*Haass's comments precede the Policing Board's Feb. 8 decision to keep the Omagh investigation in the hands of PSNI.*]

Thus far, Britain has dismantled some watchtowers and other installations. The numbers tell of the progress: 102 cross border roads formerly closed by the army have reopened; 32 security bases have been closed; 3,500 troops have left since the peace process began, bringing troop levels to the lowest level since 1970.

The economic dividends of the peace process are measurable. Foreign investment has created 31,000 new jobs since the Mitchell Agreement was signed; US investment has created more than 20,000 jobs since 1994. Manufacturing output increased by a quarter in the past few years, and exports have doubled in the past 10 years. Unemployment is down to 5.4 percent. People are returning to the North. From 1970 to 1990, about 180,000 people left the region. In the past 10 years, 20,000 have returned. There has been a four-fold increase in tourism since the height of the Troubles, with 1.6 million visitors in 2000.

Despite this progress, public support for the Mitchell Agreement is slipping. Why? There has been a failure at all levels in Northern Ireland—but particularly at the level of political

leadership—to acknowledge that the fates of the two communities are tied to one another. Unless communities share the benefits of peace, neither will know lasting security or prosperity. Leaders must resist appealing only to the dissatisfied. The pattern of politics-as-usual keeps us from recognizing the passing of an old paradigm and the emergence of a new one.

The Catholic community is thriving and moving beyond its historical status as a disadvantaged minority. Acknowledging this is not to dismiss the decades when this community suffered in an unjust society, a situation that led to the civil rights movement and eventually to the Mitchell Agreement. Nor is it to claim that discrimination of and disadvantage to Catholics has been eradicated.

The new paradigm is much more complex than the old one of minority discrimination. In this new paradigm, all communities share a future. A majority in both communities must be satisfied and have a firm stake in society for both to be comfortable.

Last summer and fall, images of Catholic schoolgirls being subjected to taunts and jeers of a Protestant crowd as they walked to school were broadcast around the world. There is no excuse for the brutish behavior and bitter sectarianism displayed by those adults in North Belfast.

This rage which spilled out in this inexcusable behavior was rooted in economic distress, uneasiness over demographic changes, lack of proper housing, and fear that the new society being built in Northern Ireland offers little place for those doing the protesting: for Protestants, for loyalists,

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Sectarianism Waves a Loyalist Banner

An Open Letter to President George Bush

By Jerry Lally, Esq., Irish American Unity Conference National Political Action Chairperson

IN A RECENT speech, **Richard Haass**, Director of Policy Planning for the State Department and the official with responsibility for Northern Ireland, referred to the "brutish behavior and bitter sectarianism displayed by those adults in North Belfast."

He was describing the obscene behavior of loyalist protestors at the Catholic Holy Cross Primary School in the Ardoyne area of north Belfast last fall. Among other actions, these adult protestors shouted vulgarities and tossed stones, balloons filled with urine and excrement, and even a blast bomb at the female students.

This problem did not just explode on the scene in 2001. It has existed in this area for decades.

"I know what it is like to be jeered at, walking down the street. I know what it is like to be scared stiff on that same street, on that same road, they came and they put us out of our home. The home that I was put out of in Belfast was a stone's throw from that little school. That school was my mother's old school. I was born and reared in Ardoyne. Many's the time I carried a hurl to school to protect myself. I know what it is to live in a home there and to have riots break out on your doorstep every single day." These words could have been uttered by any Catholic who lived in the area, but they happened to have been said by **Mary McAleese**, [President of the Republic of Ireland.]

While condemning the outrageous behavior of the protestors, Haass tried to excuse it by stating reasons for these actions. He referred to this rage as being "rooted in economic distress, uneasiness over demographic changes,

lack of proper housing and most importantly—a fear that the new society being built in Northern Ireland offers little place for those doing the protesting: for Protestants, for loyalists, for unionists."

....These protestors are evil, and it is time we stopped making excuses for them. We are not, and should not, be making excuses for al Qaeda or the Taliban. We would not make excuses for Hitler or Stalin. [Attacking innocent people is heinous.] Why do we therefore make excuses for a group [that refuses] to admit that its totalitarian rule is over? It has abused the Catholic population from day one of the setting up of...Northern Ireland 80 years ago.

Contrary to the implication of Haass, nationalist and republican leaders have continually called for the inclusion of all the people on an equal basis. Equality is never acceptable to bigots because [bigots] believe that they are more equal than others are by reason of their birth. People who believe in equality do not throw balloons filled with urine at four-year-old girls.

Perhaps what Haass wanted to say was that the obscene actions of these protestors are the dying gasps of bigots who realize in their guts that their time is coming to an end but refuse to admit it....

[All of this] will end when we tell the bigots that it is over, that their brutal repression of the rights of Catholics has to cease. By we, I mean the United States of America. It is time to abandon the..."two warring tribes" fiction. There are no two warring tribes....[There are loyalists who have] improperly exercised domination over [nationalists]....

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for unionists. What the world saw only as sectarian bigotry was much more. We were witnesses to a community in the midst of a painful transition. This growing insecurity and feeling of isolation on the part of many in the Protestant community has manifested itself in different ways. It, for instance, underlies both the shift in unionist politics away from the moderate center and the growing violence in loyalist communities.

What some see as the removal of symbols of oppression, others see as a

stripping away of their identity. What some view as the rightful correction of past economic and political imbalances, others view as a threat to their livelihood. What some perceive to be a benign historical inevitability, others regard as a destabilizing challenge to the constitutional order. Widening our perspective will require us to admit that focusing on the grievances of only one community can make us blind to problems which threaten the prospects for lasting peace for the entire society.

Community leaders also have an obligation to promote a collective vision of the future for all citizens. The business sector of Northern Ireland has prospered in recent years. Increased trade and a stable business climate are clear-cut peace dividends. Those reaping such rewards must not only recognize what they have gained through peace, but must actively connect their good fortune—and the employment they provide and the goods and services they offer—to the

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McGuinness: IRA Did Not Fire on Bloody Sunday

"ON BLOODY Sunday, I was the adjutant of the Derry Command of the IRA," Sinn Fein's **Martin McGuinness** tells the Bloody Sunday inquiry in a recently submitted statement.

Thirty years ago, British soldiers opened fire on a peaceful protest in Derry, killing 14 civilians.

Thirty years later, the Saville Inquiry is attempting to get at the truth of what happened between the British and the Irish people that day.

McGuinness's statement reveals he wanted to find a rifle and retaliate once he realized British paratroopers had slain 13 civil rights marchers. However, IRA leaders decided against such action.

"If we brought weapons into the area we would give the British army an excuse to go further. Therefore the decision was taken not to engage the British forces," McGuinness says, adding he was confident nobody disobeyed this order.

Now the Minister of Education in the

North, McGuinness is expected to take the witness stand at the inquiry. His statement provides a bird's eye view of IRA movements on Bloody Sunday.

He refutes British allegations that he opened fire at soldiers on that day. He also says the IRA assured march organizers that IRA members in the Bogside, where the march was to take place, would not be armed.

Describing his role in the IRA, he states, "I was only 21...and found myself in a position and role that was not defined. This was not a conventional army. A lot of the volunteers were younger than [I was]. There were very few older men....My role was to ensure that the units met regularly, that the organization was properly structured, and that discipline was maintained.

"There was a quartermaster. I was never the quartermaster, [as British intelligence has suggested]," he states.

McGuinness denies the IRA used civil rights marches as cover from

which to launch attacks on British forces: "I can never recall a civil rights march where the IRA had taken advantage of people...to attack the British army. It was unthinkable."

McGuinness states that march organizers approached the commanding officer of the IRA on the Thursday before Bloody Sunday. He later ordered two units of the IRA to patrol the Creggan and Brandywell districts in case the army used the march to move into the no-go areas.

"All other volunteers were advised that they could either attend the march or have the day to spend with their families. Most volunteers, myself included, attended the march. We were all unarmed," McGuinness says.

The IRA believed the British were trying to drag it into a fight. "It was concluded that any military engagement with the British army then would see us fall into a trap and it would be a serious mistake to take weapons to the scene of the shootings," McGuinness says.

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Mitchell Agreement. Business leaders have an obligation to support the politics that helped deliver this economic environment. If the anti-Agreement forces dictate the future of politics in Northern Ireland, everyone, including the business community, will pay the price.

The US will continue to play its role as impartial advisor, honest broker, and firm supporter of the Mitchell Agreement. This past year, the US government increased its annual contribution to the International Fund for Ireland to \$25 million. The Fund and our programs are dedicated to economic and social projects that encourage contact, dialogue, and

reconciliation between nationalists and unionists throughout Ireland.

Last month, the Department of State sponsored an informational tour to the US for eleven members of the new policing board. The visit provided the delegation first-hand exposure to American experiences with community policing, accountability, and management techniques. Our consulate in Belfast organizes a range of public diplomacy programs focused on promoting goals such as integrated education and urban regeneration. These types of activities also offer opportunities for American groups to play a part in contributing to the new Northern Ireland.

Finally, our government supports the Walsh Visa Program, which brings young people from the North and the border countries of the Republic to the US to develop job skills and learn the principles of conflict resolution.

We look forward to working with people of all party affiliations in Northern Ireland to combat crime and lawlessness. We plan to assist in this effort through newly re-established US law-enforcement training programs conducted through the FBI and designed to promote the professional development of the new police service. We will be searching for other ways to make this partnership more robust.

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Action Requests

*Please take the actions recommended below.
Mention that you are a PEC member.*

Contact: Sen. **Debby Sanderson**, Room 314,
Senate Office Building, 404 S. Monroe St.,
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100; tele. 850-487-5100;
email sanderson.debby.web@leg.state.fl.us

Message: I commend you for withdrawing bill S1160
that would have repealed MacBride Principles of Fair
Employment in Northern Ireland legislation. I also
commend your willingness to listen to the concerns
of American citizens on this matter.

Contact: **Richard Haass**, Director, State Dept.
Policy Planning, Department of State, 2201 C
Street NW, Washington, DC 20520; tele. 202-647-
4000; fax 202-647-0844; email r.haass@state.gov

Message: I urge you to pressure the British
government to end the loyalist attacks on
schoolchildren. The situation has continued for
months, and loyalist attacks have spread from schools
to homes. Talk of disarmament must include the
immediate disarming of loyalists.

Contact: **President George Bush**, The White
House, Washington, DC 20500; tele. 202-456-1111;
fax 202-456-2461; email president@whitehouse.gov

Message: Please urge Britain to set up an
independent inquiry into the death of lawyer Pat
Finucane. This matter is particularly urgent in light of
your recently signing an order to allow the RUC to
train with the FBI.

(continued from Page 2)

Secretary of State, **John Reid**, will do all he can to try to
improve and deal with that situation." Ahern says he would
be surprised if the PSNI did not know the identity of the
leaders of the loyalist gangs.

January 18

Thousands of people in Belfast, Derry, and other city
centers attend rallies against sectarian violence.

January 22

As Sinn Fein's four members of the British parliament
move into offices at Westminster, they make it clear they
will never sit in the House of Commons. "There will never,
ever be Sinn Fein MPs sitting in the British Houses of
Parliament," Sinn Fein president **Gerry Adams** says,
vehemently dismissing Trimble's suggestions to that effect.
He says, "The transfer of power by London and Dublin to
the Assembly in the North is all proof of where we see the
political center of gravity on the island of Ireland, and that is
in the island of Ireland." Dundalk pub owner **Colm
Murphy** is convicted of conspiring to cause the Omagh
bombing in 1998.

January 25

Adams is the second most popular political leader among
voters in the Irish Republic, according to an *Irish Times*
poll. The paper put the popularity rating of the Sinn Fein
chief at 56 percent, running behind only Ahern.

January 28

Jackie McDonald, a UFF representative to the
decommissioning body, says in a newspaper interview, "We
are well on the way to a united Ireland" but that loyalists
will not settle for it. The *Sunday World* reports his saying,
"I do not think we can stop it, but acting together, we can
slow it down, at the same time promoting Ulster and making
us as secure in the United Kingdom as long as we can."