

May 2011

Owen Patterson

British Secretary of State

British Parliament, London UK

It is with great interest that the National Board of the Ancient Order of Hibernians in America, the largest Irish American organization in the United States, has noted that your department is taking a review of the 50/50 recruitment policy for the Police Service of Northern Ireland recommended by the Patton Report. We feel that this review of this recommendation by Patton, which has not completed its goal of a minimum 40% of force being nationalist, is being done to appease the Unionist parties in the Assembly.

The National Board of the AOH has always supported the Peace Process and wholeheartedly endorsed Senator Mitchell's work with all parties in the North at the request of President Clinton. We know that policing was by far the most vexing problem and required the most work to bring the Good Friday Agreement to fruition. Patton was the minimum acceptable to the Nationalist population and we believe it is essential that all portions of the Report be brought to fulfillment.

As evidence of our support for Peace our National Board signed a letter to the Irish Republican Army, at a critical point, requesting that they put their arms beyond use, weeks before Sinn Fein made the same request. We also promised that we would support the Nationalist Community in their just causes.

We, the members of the AOH, who frequently visit friends and relatives though out the six counties of N. Ireland and are always educating ourselves on the Peace Process, are fully aware that there is still great mistrust in the Nationalist Community with the present PSNI. This would only be made worse if this vital piece 50/50 recruitment was removed from Patton before it had completed its goal.

Dissident Republicans would point to this review as more evidence that the Government was not living up to its promises and rightly so. We request that your office immediately halt any review of Patton, especially the 50/50 Recruitment until its minimum goal of 40% of the PSNI being Nationalist/Catholic.

Please prove that the PSNI, unlike the RUC, is no longer "A Protestant Force for a Protestant people."

Sincerely,

Seamus Boyle National President
Ancient Order of Hibernians in America