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# News & Opinion

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## Meet the top Tory who's being hotly tipped to be next Secretary of State

### Andersonstown News Monday

The politician tipped to become the next Secretary of State for the North has launched a stinging attack on the DUP over its support of 42-day detention for terrorist suspects.

Shadow Secretary of State Owen Patterson said the Conservative Party was "very disappointed" with the DUP.

He warned that any concessions the Peter Robinson-led party forced out of the Labour government in return for backing the bill will mean nothing if the Tories win the next election – a probability rather than a possibility given the Labour party's recent travails.

In a wide-ranging interview, the MP for North Shropshire refused to support calls for an independent inquiry into the Pat Finucane murder and complained that the British taxpayer supports our economy to the tune of £8 billion a year.

He also revealed he has "no idea" if the IRA Army Council still exists and refused to accept as a fact collusion between the British security services and loyalist paramilitaries.

"The DUP are very wrong on the issue," said Mr Patterson, referring to the 42-detention bill that went through the House of Commons last week, and which would not have passed without the votes of the nine DUP MPs.

"This terrible breach of our very basic liberties will be misinterpreted. The Conservative Party is very disappointed and very angry."

The DUP's support for the bill has seriously damaged its relations with the Tories – as have claims it wrangled £1.2 billion in concessions out of Gordon Brown in return for its backing.

Mr Patterson said he questioned DUP MPs on reports of a deal, but they denied all knowledge. However, he remains suspicious – so much so that the Tories are now promising that any deal struck will be meaningless if they win the next election.

He added: "If the DUP thinks the revenue from the sale of military sites will be put back into Northern Ireland, well, I have spoken to Liam Fox [Shadow Secretary of Defence], and he is adamant that if we come to power the proceeds of military sites are going to the Ministry of Defence, so all bets are off."

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### Business & Recruitment

## Government urged to provide more help for social enterprise

THE first ever social enterprise trade show became the foreground for a campaign to urge the government to recognise the contribution social enterprises make to society. At the all-Ireland Trade event, Networks 2008, held at St George's Market on Tuesday, social enterprise businesses were given the chance to raise the profile of the services they provide in the community. Speaking at the event, John Steele, Chairman of Bryson Charitable Group, made the call for the



The Tory minister urged the North of Ireland to “grow up”, complaining that British taxpayers are sick of propping up our economy.

He added: “Northern Ireland has to grow up. It depends on an £8 billion subvention from the British taxpayer over and above that which is raised in taxation.

“We have to get the public sector down and we have to get the private sector up. You cannot keep looking over to the nanny at Westminster to keep sending buckets of money.

“You have to stop looking for the government to do things – the whole attitude is wrong. It's not the government that is going to sort out the economy, it's going to be private people and people with bright ideas.”

Current Secretary of State Shaun Woodward has indicated that when policing and justice powers are devolved there may no longer be a need for a Secretary of State – a view Mr Patterson does not share.

He said: “I personally think there is a role for the Secretary of State. It is very important.

“We have made such progress, very much thanks to close collaboration between London, Dublin and Washington. That is a very critical link to keep going.”

Mr Patterson said that dissident republicans continued to pose a threat to stability.

“Like everyone else, we have no idea if the [IRA] Army Council still exists or not,” he said. “I think more important is that there is a small number of dissidents, completely out of tune with their community, who do represent a threat.”

#### Finucane

The one killing from the Troubles that has haunted successive British Secretaries of State more than any other is the 1989 murder of West Belfast solicitor Pat Finucane. Next year marks the 20th anniversary of the death of the human rights solicitor.

The British government has offered the Finucane family an inquiry into the murder under the terms of the Inquiries Act, meaning documents can be withheld from public scrutiny.

The Finucanes have refused this, insisting on a full independent inquiry into the UDA killing that was planned by British military and security agents.

Like previous Secretaries of State, Owen Patterson is refusing to support the Finucane family's demands.

## Property News

# What housing slump?



Thousands of local buyers defied reports of a property market slump last week as they queued for a dream home in Northern Ireland's first eco-village. Lisburn's Brokerstown Village, a development of more than 1,000 energy efficient homes, was buzzing with interest from buyers at its two open days earlier this month. In fact, selling agent Ulster Property Sales estimated that more than 2,000 visitors have already flocked to the eco-friendly and ever so chic 'future-proof' properties, which offer 60 per

He said: "The family has been offered an inquiry under the terms of the Inquiries Act. We are looking at how we handle the past in general. We've had Eames and Bradley reporting. I'm over here every week discussing what we should be doing in the future about the past. I'm not going to jump off on one particular case, but it is a huge issue."

Pressed on whether he believes collusion was a reality, Mr Patterson replied: "I can't comment on that. The fact is that there was a very determined armed insurgency for many years and some very unpleasant things happened, and some terrible damage was done."

The Shadow Secretary of State then stressed the importance of the transfer of policing and justice powers to the devolved Assembly. However, he insisted this could not take place until both communities are ready to move forward together.

He said: "There is no point switching responsibility to gain the respect of one community if you lose the other community, so this must have cross-community support.

"We support devolution of policing and justice, but it must go ahead at the right time when both communities are happy."