

# NATIONAL ARCHIVES

## IRELAND



<b>Reference Code:</b>	2015/51/1420
<b>Creation Date(s):</b>	2 November 1985
<b>Extent and medium:</b>	4 pages
<b>Creator(s):</b>	Department of Foreign Affairs
<b>Access Conditions:</b>	Open
<b>Copyright:</b>	National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

PETER KING, COMPTROLLER, NASSAU COUNTY, NEW YORK (R)

---

Born in 1945, married to Rosemary King with two daughters, he lives in Seaford, Long Island. He went to school in Queens and Brooklyn.

A councilman in Hempstead, Long Island, he was elected to the post of County Comptroller in October, 1981. His name began to appear regularly in Irish American media from late 1980, coinciding with his seeking election.

His name has been linked with the election campaign of fellow Republican Senator Alphonse D'Amato, whom he is reported to have persuaded to go to Northern Ireland after the latter's election in December 1980. (They were accompanied by Nassau County District Attorney, Denis Dillon (D)).

In August 1981, Peter King took part in a five-man "International Tribunal" which looked at the use of plastic bullets in Northern Ireland. He returned again to Northern Ireland in November of that year, to "meet Long Kesh families". This is the context of his concern for the "civil rights for Northern Irish Catholics and human rights for IRA prisoners and dependents and their families".

In October 1982, he went again to Northern Ireland, this time to "observe the Show Trials". After his return (his visit being at the invitation of the 'Relatives for Justice' group) he issued a public 'report' which was printed in the Congressional Record at the request of Mario Biaggi, inter alios (copy attached). Mr. King's visit was followed in greatest detail by the Irish People.

#### GRAND MARSHAL CAMPAIGN 1984

Of the New York Irish American media, greatest coverage of Peter King, seems to be in the Irish People. It was this paper which first announced that he was running for Grand Marshal of the 1984 parade. The first endorsements of his candidacy came from John Sugrue of the American Irish Congress (proINA) which exists essentially in Nassau County only, the Nassau County Board of the AOH, Queens County Board of the AOH (Michael Flannery's home) the Nassau Chapter of the Police Emerald Society, and Suffolk County Board of the AOH. According to the Irish People (7.1.84) these endorsements showed that that Irish American Community wanted a Grand Marshal "to be committed to a free and United Ireland as Michael Flannery was in 1983". Further no one was "more qualified to carry Michael Flannery's banner than Peter King", Irish People 24.12.83.

- 2 -

At the Christmas reception of the Grand Council of the Emerald Societies, 14.12.83, Michael Flannery publicly endorsed Peter King's candidacy.

As Deputy Chairman of the AOH National Freedom for All Ireland Committee, he is probably the real chairman, as the official one Martin Higgins, is in his 80's.

#### GRAND MARSHAL campaign 1985

Heading the list of endorsements were Michael Flannery, Denis Dillon and Martin Galvin. Other "notables" supporting him include Fr. Maurice Burke, Dr. Phil Bolger, Martin Lyons, Mary Holt Moore and Ken Tierney of Fort Worth 5. The Irish People in its editorial of 9.2.85 endorsed King as one who has not adopted .."the pro-British stance supported by the Irish Free State".

#### PETER KING

Born in New York, brought up in Queens and Brooklyn. His father's family reportedly came from Innisboffin, Co. Galway and his maternal grandmother from Limerick.

His background is Republican. He participated in Sen. A. D'Amato's campaign in 1980. He became a councilman for Hempstead Town, Nassau County. In October 1981' he was elected County Comptroller. He lives in his constituency. (Qualified as a lawyer)

Attended funeral of hunger striker, Kieran Doherty, August 1981.

He has visited Ireland five times since 1981, most recently in the last week of January when he attended the James Crockard "supergrass" trial and met with loyalist extremists as well as Provisional Sinn Fein and perhaps the IRA.

KING'S statements and positions on Northern Ireland and the  
Irish Government

(also includes comments or views attributed to him, which to our knowledge he has not denied).

"In 1984 King charged that Gleason and O'Hagan have been "waffling" in their support of the IRA."

"The Irish Republican government is terrified that, once again in 1984, the Irish-American community will select a grand marshal who is opposed to British oppression in Northern Ireland".

"I think the IRA is a legitimate and authentic voice in Northern Ireland."

"A county official accused Irish Prime Minister Garret Fitzgerald of "perverting the spirit of St. Patrick's Day." "

"King said press reports from Dublin indicated that Fitzgerald's speech " will be an attack upon Irish-Americans who support the fight against British oppression in Northern Ireland"."

"It is unconscionable that the U.S. Congress should provide a forum to a foreign official who has given prior notice that he will use that forum to malign ...those who oppose his ~~immoral~~ quisling policy in Northern Ireland" King said.

"The Nassau County Controller professes to be a supporter of the IRA, which is the most commonly known reference to the Irish guerrilla fighters who go under the name of the Irish Republican Army." (Daily News February 10, 1984.)

"King added" I think the IRA is the legitimate voice of occupied Ireland." "

"King was quoted by United Press International as saying the Dublin Government circulated reports that it would not participate in the parade if he is elected grand marshal. He told the Post that the News editorial appeared to be a further attempt to sway uncommitted voters away from him. " This is obvious and inexcusable interference in Irish-American affairs by a foreign government," said King. "It is a clumsy attempt to intimidate the Irish American community." "

" I believe that we must support the movement for freedom in Ireland in all of its manifestations including the Irish Republican Army."

" There is one candidate whose election would deter those who wish to cancel the messages transmitted a year ago. That candidate is Peter King. Peter King, Nassau County Comptroller, has been an articulate defender of the right of the Irish people to national freedom, and of the legitimate struggle of the Irish Republican Army to drive British terrorist occupation forces out of Ireland. King has been a long-time supporter of Irish Northern Aid's efforts to generate funds for the families of Irish political prisoners."

" Recently, King sponsored a press conference for Danny Morrison, the elected Sinn Fein representative, and has just returned from Ireland exposing Britain's sham informer show trials."

" The unprecedented early endorsements of King send a clear signal that the grass-roots Irish American community wants the 1984 grand marshal to be as committed to a free and united Ireland as Michael Flannery was in 1983."