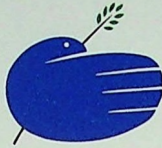


FORUM FOR PEACE  
AND RECONCILIATIONFÓRAM UM SHÍOCHÁIN  
AGUS ÁTHMHUINTEARAS**No point in Talking to Spring - Alderdice tells Unionists**

Alliance Leader, Dr John Alderdice, has reacted angrily to Tanaiste Dick Spring's negative comments about elections to All-Party Talks.

Dr Alderdice said:

"I am afraid that if unionists were to ask me about talking to Dick Spring, at present, I should have to tell them that they would be wasting their time. I don't believe they would find him open minded or prepared to listen to what they have to say.

Prior to Christmas I and my colleagues, participants in the Forum, arranged to meet Mr Spring. Immediately in advance of the meeting he condemned in forthright terms the proposals which he knew we were about to discuss with him, before he even knew their content. A failure of politeness, much less of open-mindedness. Now he claims that elections to all party talks are a notion from only one side of the community. I regard that as a smear on my party, and a degree of partisanship, which seriously weakens the value he can have as a constructive contributor to balanced agreement. I trust that he will realize how damaging these remarks have been. If not, then it begs some questions about whether he wants talks in order to have a real exchange, or whether it is all about playing political games."

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