

COMMENTS BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE, RT HON PETER BROOKE, MP  
DURING A "DOORSTEP" BY THE MEDIA AT DUNCANNON: 22 JANUARY 1991

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STATEMENT BY THE RT HON PETER BROOKE MP,  
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

What do you think of the talks. Where do they stand?

Christmas should be a season of peace the world over. At the end of the year in which the momentous changes in Europe have shown the scope for new political development, a ceasefire in Northern Ireland albeit brief is a welcome epilogue to 1990 and may be a pointer to achieving a lasting solution in 1991. This is, of course, too late to be of any comfort to families facing Christmas without a loved one as a result of terrorist action. There could, however, be no better news on the eve of the New Year than that the message that terrorism cannot be allowed to succeed may have taken root and that recognition has dawned that there is no future for terrorism. If this ceasefire signals a more prolonged renunciation of violence, then the importance of dialogue as part of the democratic tradition is reinforced. It may be that there will be a chance in 1991 to set about resolving what some have thought intractable problems. If this is to be so, it will call for imagination and perseverance in all the peoples of these islands.

making progress if the talks continue in the way that they are. The fact that it is so narrow and therefore the opportunity of putting down the shutters and calling it a day, as ready as the fact that people aren't suggests that they do actually get across the final gap.

Interviewer:

Does this mean that it's now down to putting the final proposal to Dublin at your next meeting before the talks start?

Mr Brooke:

On all these occasions you've got to make sure that you are clear with what you want to do, and it's perfectly understandable to see each of the Parties - using Parties in its widest sense -