

POL 35/233(1)

13 D'OLIER STREET, DUBLIN
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TIME TO START TALKING

Mr Peter Brooke pointed yesterday to an irony that may not have struck the leaders of the Provisional IRA and their allies in Sinn Fein: if terrorism persists, the only people who will have no part in the political process are those who profess to be dedicated to unity but insist on pursuing their objectives by violent means.

"We do not seek to disenfranchise those who choose to vote Sinn Fein," Mr Brooke said at Enniskillen. "But while violence continues their representatives, and therefore the ideas they espouse, can have no place in the process of determining future relationships and structures in Northern Ireland, in the United Kingdom and in the island of Ireland."

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The obvious challenge was issued against a background of increasing sectarian violence in Belfast where, as Cardinal Daly fears, events have taken a more sinister turn than at any time since the 1970s and some believe that a widespread recurrence of the vendetta-style murders of 15 to 20 years ago is becoming daily more likely.

But violence, as Monsignor Thomas Bartley emphasised yesterday at a funeral service for one of the latest victims, will not stop until politicians are willing to talk to each other and to compromise on their objectives: a reminder of the expectations, encouraged by Mr Brooke himself, that the inter-party discussions which came to a halt in July would be resumed this autumn.

However, the exclusion — at their own insistence — of those who most militantly aspire to unity is only one of the sadly ironic features of the political process. Observers in London detect a subtle change of mood in the Conservative Party which allows the unionists to live in hope of a more influential role in the aftermath of a British general election — if it should prove inconclusive and the Conservatives are forced to rely on UUP and DUP MPs to win and hold power.

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The date of an election was always bound to influence the timing of any attempt to resume Mr Brooke's initiative. A 1992 election, it had been thought, would leave time for discussions at least between now and the New Year. If a combination of unionists hopes and Conservative fears — of a finely balanced parliament — were to postpone a resumption, it would be an opportunity wasted when the community needs most the hope of movement towards a settlement.

The formation of special police groups to meet the threats posed by republican and loyalist paramilitaries in north Belfast is welcome and all the better for being even-handed. It cannot and should not be thought a substitute for political action. The urgency of getting inter-party discussions under way must be emphasised by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Collins, when he meets Mr Brooke at the meeting of the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference on Thursday.

15/10/91
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EMD NOTE

THIS REMINDS
EMD OF OATLEY'S
HABIT OF
SENDING BD NEWS-
PAPER CLIPPINGS.
NOTE THAT THESE
APPEAR TO HAVE
BEEN FAXED FROM
A BELFAST NO.
COULD IT BE
OATLEY & CO.
FROM
HOLLYWOOD?

THE SECOND PAGE
IS REFERENCED
AS "Ir T 15/10"
A IRISH TIMES
15/10/91
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PRESUMABLY!

15/10/91
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Indirect appeal issued to IRA

From Gerry Moriarty,
in Enniskillen

THE Northern Secretary, Mr Peter Brooke, has issued an indirect appeal to the IRA to end its campaign of violence and indicated in such an eventuality Sinn Fein would be invited into the general political process.

Mr Brooke strongly condemned the activities of the IRA in a speech he gave yesterday to the Enniskillen Rotary Club but his carefully worded address also reinforced the expectation that the British Government would positively respond to an IRA cessation of violence.

He said it was ironic that if terrorism persisted the only people who would continue to have no part in the political process were those who pretended to be dedicated to Irish unity. "It is one of the tragedies of the present situation — and a fundamental incoherence in the posture of the Provisional movement — that they claim to have political objectives but the means they adopt ensure that they are excluded from the political process," said Mr Brooke.

He said that there were signs that the leadership of the republican movement has

begun to recognise that the attempt to combine bullet and ballot box was unreal.

In a strongly implied call on the IRA to lay down arms he said: "There is a need now for more positive gestures — gestures which can be recognised as such by the whole community and which would be welcomed."

Mr Brooke also indicated that Sinn Fein would be called into the political process in such an eventuality when he said:

"We do not seek to disenfranchise those who choose to vote Sinn Fein in the democratic protection of their individual interest. But while violence continues their representatives, and therefore the ideas they espouse, can have no place in the process of determining future relationships and structures in Northern Ireland, in the United Kingdom and in the island of Ireland."

Sinn Fein Ard Comhairle member, Mr Martin McGuinness, said that his party remained committed to the need for flexibility and dialogue but the British Government by "its selective imposition of preconditions to dialogue" was setting obstacles to peace.