



NORTHERN IRELAND Information Service

31 July 1989

EMBARGO: 5PM

**THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT WAS ISSUED TODAY BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE,
RT HON PETER BROOKE, MP:**

I am very glad to be here in Belfast, to take up my challenging duties. I look forward to meeting people and to seeing more of Northern Ireland at first hand.

Today's savage bomb attack in Belfast underlines once more the importance of us all standing together against terrorism. As Tom King said only last week, terrorism cannot win; but it can and does bring suffering to people on both sides of the community. Let me repeat: terrorism is an evil we are utterly determined to resist. It is horrific and contemptible; it is also futile.

I pay tribute to the brave and skilful work of the police and the army in combating terrorist violence and crime. Both play a critical role in saving life and guarding the community.

Of equal priority is the Government's work in strengthening the local economy and reducing unemployment further. I know how hard Tom King worked on this and I too shall want to do all I can to create more employment - and fair employment - for Northern Ireland.

I also attach great importance to the revitalisation of local political life. Our primary duty is to govern and to improve conditions in Northern Ireland. I want to see local people playing a greater part in managing the affairs of Northern Ireland. One of my first actions on arrival in Belfast was to write to the leaders of the main constitutional parties here saying that I looked forward to working with them - and to meeting them soon.

I also look forward to my first meeting with Irish Ministers and to working with them,

building on the constructive relationship which offers a real basis and real hope for tackling our common problems.

I shall work hard to bring together both sides of the community. The Government aims to create a fair society where the aspirations of both sides of the community are respected and all can see their talents and skills rewarded in a fair society - their society - free of discrimination. I am determined that we shall build on the reforms and successes of the last twenty years - not allow the terrorists to undermine them.