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## NORTHERN IRELAND Information Service

US CONGRESSIONAL VISIT: SOS LUNCHEON

4 September 1991

The Secretary of State, Rt Hon Peter Brooke MP, today hosted a luncheon at Hillsborough Castle for members of a US Congressional delegation who are visiting Northern Ireland.

Welcoming the delegation, led by the Hon Thomas Foley, speaker of the US House of Representatives, the Secretary of State said the visit would not only contribute to greater American understanding of the Northern Ireland situation but would strengthen the links forged between the Province and the USA over many generations.

Referring to the recent Stormont talks, Mr Brooke told the delegation that the conclusion of the talks on 3 July was not the end of the story. He said: "There is unfinished business to transact. We have a valuable basis for further dialogue and I am determined to explore with the others concerned the scope for building upon it."

Outlining the security situation, the Secretary of State said recent events in Newry and the outrage so clearly expressed by the people of the Cooley area at the murder of Thomas Oliver, showed that PIRA's hypocrisy deceived no one. He said: "The overwhelming majority of people here reject violence and want justice dispensed fairly and impartially, and not by kangaroo courts. This gives me great hope for the future; and determination to do all I can to work for that future to be peaceful, prosperous and just."

Referring to last night's firebomb attacks on six stores in the Belfast area, the Secretary of State told the American visitors that the IRA was conducting "a campaign of job destruction".

"Initial reports indicate that a large number of jobs may have been lost and that the damage will cost hundreds of thousands of pounds to repair," said Mr Brooke.

"Organisations like the Irish National Caucus in the US are advocating the MacBride Principles and urging a boycott of Ford cars with the declared aim of achieving Fair Employment in Northern Ireland. It is a great irony that they do not comment on the Provisional IRA - who are hell bent on destroying jobs. This can only be seen as an attack on working people, both Catholic and Protestant."

The Secretary of State also told Speaker Foley that he was disgusted by the latest sectarian murder of a young Catholic, Mr Seamus Sullivan, by loyalists in Belfast yesterday evening. This was just killing for the sake of it and is abhorred by virtually the entire community.

"All decent people must speak out to show the killers on both sides that they have nothing to offer the ordinary people and they have no place in a decent society. They should be ostracised."

Referring to the International Fund for Ireland, Mr Brooke said:  
"The Fund has become a most significant catalyst for economic and social change in Northern Ireland. It has fostered a sense of confidence and mutual understanding in communities where little or none may have existed before. I am very pleased to have the opportunity today to thank you all personally for your continuing interest and strong support for the Fund."

Mr Brooke added: "Not only does the Fund provide significant financial support, it also sends the important signal, to those working on individual projects at grass roots level, that their

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efforts do not go unnoticed but are recognised and valued in the wider world - particularly in the United States where there are people in high places who do care, and who want, even at a distance, to be part of the process of healing.

"The unwavering commitment of the Friends of Ireland, and particularly of you, Mr Speaker, both to the Fund and to the pursuit of non-violent democratic politics in Northern Ireland, is very much appreciated by all of us engaged in working towards a more peaceful and prosperous future."