

## NATIONAL ARCHIVES

### IRELAND



**Reference Code:** 2005/7/600

**Title:** Text of a New Year's Eve Message from Merlyn Rees, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, to the people of Northern Ireland. Also includes a report of the signing of six exclusion orders under anti-terrorist laws by Roy Jenkins, British Home Secretary.

**Creation Date(s):** [31 December], 1974

**Level of description:** Item

**Extent and medium:** 1 page

**Creator(s):** Department of the Taoiseach

**Access Conditions:** Open

**Copyright:** National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

NEW YEAR'S EVE MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE, MR MERLYN REES  
MP, TO THE PEOPLE OF NORTHERN IRELAND

124

AT THE END OF 1974 WE IN NORTHERN IRELAND LOOK BACK OVER ANOTHER  
YEAR IN WHICH TOO MANY PEOPLE HAVE SUFFERED FROM VIOLENT ACTION  
FROM WITHIN A SOCIETY DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF.

*Handwritten notes:*  
F.P. [unclear]  
[unclear]  
[unclear]  
[unclear]

I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY ON BEHALF OF THE WHOLE  
COMMUNITY TO PAY TRIBUTE TO MEMBERS OF THE RUC AND THE ARMY AND TO  
PAY TRIBUTE MYSELF TO THE PEOPLE OF NORTHERN IRELAND WHO HAVE  
CONTINUED TO GO ABOUT THEIR ORDINARY DAILY BUSINESS DESPITE  
DIFFICULTIES.

*Handwritten notes:*  
blaw  
For  
519284

MY MESSAGE TODAY IS ONE OF HOPE. PEOPLE FROM MANY WALKS OF LIFE  
HAVE ALREADY SHOWN THAT THEY CAN WORK TOGETHER IN THE INTERESTS OF  
BOTH COMMUNITIES. WE NOW LOOK FORWARD TO A CONSTITUTIONAL  
CONVENTION IN WHICH REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL THE PEOPLE WILL SIT  
DOWN TOGETHER TO SEEK TO AGREE FOR THE GOOD OF NORTHERN IRELAND  
ON THE CONSTITUTIONAL FUTURE OF THEIR COUNTRY. MAY THEY FIND THAT  
WHICH UNITES THEM GREATER THAN THAT WHICH DIVIDES.

*Handwritten notes:*  
wvk  
2/11/75

THE REAL IMPORTANCE OF THE TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF VIOLENCE AT THE  
END OF 1974 IS THAT IT REFLECTS THE WISH OF PEOPLE OF ALL BELIEFS  
IN NORTHERN IRELAND TO SEE A LASTING END TO VIOLENCE.

THE MESSAGES THAT ARE REACHING ME SHOW THAT PEOPLE ARE NOT  
LOOKING FOR A TEMPORARY CESSATION OF VIOLENCE. THEY SEEK A LASTING  
PEACE. THAT IS WHAT THE GOVERNMENT SEEKS. NOT A PAUSE - BUT AN END.

I SAID BEFORE CHRISTMAS THAT A GENUINE AND SUSTAINED CESSATION  
OF VIOLENCE WILL CREATE A NEW SITUATION AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR  
PROGRESS. IF THAT OCCURS THE GOVERNMENT WILL NOT BE FOUND  
WANTING IN ITS RESPONSE. I CAN ASSURE THE PATIENT, LAW-ABIDING  
PEOPLE IN BOTH COMMUNITIES THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL NOT BARTER  
THEIR SAFETY FOR A TEMPORARY RESPITE FROM MURDER AND DESTRUCTION.

I INTEND DURING JANUARY TO SET OUT MORE FULLY HOW THE PERMANENT  
CESSATION OF VIOLENCE WOULD ENABLE THE ARMY TO MAKE A PLANNED,  
ORDERLY AND PROGRESSIVE REDUCTION IN ITS PRESENT COMMITMENT AND  
HOW ONCE VIOLENCE HAS CEASED AND IS SEEN TO HAVE CEASED IT WOULD  
ALSO BECOME POSSIBLE FOR THOSE WHO ARE DETAINED TO BE PROGRESSIVELY  
RELEASED.

I MUST, HOWEVER, ALSO REPEAT THAT THE ACTIONS OF THE SECURITY  
FORCES WILL CONTINUE TO BE RELATED TO THE LEVEL OF ANY ACTIVITY  
THAT MAY OCCUR. I AM NOT GOING TO ACT PRECIPITATELY BEFORE I AM  
CONVINCED THAT THE OPPORTUNITIES ARE REAL AND NOT ILLUSORY. BUT  
ONCE I AM SO CONVINCED AND ONCE MEN AND WOMEN OF GOODWILL IN  
NORTHERN IRELAND ARE SO CONVINCED, I SHALL BE READY TO RESPOND  
WITH THE SINCERITY AND FLEXIBILITY WHICH THE NEW SITUATION WILL  
DEMAND AND WHICH PEOPLE OF BOTH COMMUNITIES WILL THEN EXPECT  
OF ME.

MY HOPE FOR 1975 IS THAT THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE OF NORTHERN IRELAND  
FOR A LASTING RESOLUTION OF THEIR PROBLEMS WILL TRIUMPH.

#### SIX MORE ORDERED OUT

HOME SECRETARY ROY JENKINS TODAY SIGNED ANOTHER SIX EXCLUSION  
ORDERS UNDER THE ANTI-TERRORIST LAWS.

THE ORDERS WILL BE SERVED ON SIX PEOPLE DETAINED BY POLICE  
DURING SWOOPS AT SOUTHAMPTON OVER THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY.

THEY WERE HELD IN A ASSIVE POLICE HUNT FOR SIX I.R.A.  
SUSPECTS AFTER THE DISCOVERY OF A BOMB-MAKING FACTORY.

THE TOTAL OF EXCLUSION ORDERS SIGNED BY MR JENKINS,  
INCLUDING THE SIX TODAY, IS 19. SIX PEOPLE HAVE BEEN SENT OUT OF  
THE COUNTRY.

FOUR ORDERS ARE AGAINST PEOPLE WHO ARE AT PRESENT ABROAD,  
IN ONE CASE REPRESENTATIONS AGAINST THE ORDER ARE BEING CONSIDERED  
AND TWO ORDERS LAPSED WHEN THE PEOPLE CONCERNED WERE CHARGED  
WITH CRIMINAL OFFENCES.