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Oliver Napier at the opening of the
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FOR HENNESSY FROM BURKE.

OPENING STATEMENT BY OLIVER NAPIER, LEADER OF THE ALLIANCE PARTY.

THE ALLIANCE PARTY HAS COME TO THIS CONFERENCE IN THE SPIRIT OF HOPE AS ONE OF THE PARTIES INVOLVED IN DISCUSSIONS ON THE FORMATION OF A NORTHERN IRELAND EXECUTIVE. WE AGREED IN THESE DISCUSSIONS WITH THE UNIONISTS AND THE SDLP TO WORK FOR THE FUTURE OF THE PEOPLE OF NORTHERN IRELAND AND FORGET ABOUT THE PAST. NONE OF THESE PARTIES HAD SURRENDERED OR HAD NEEDED TO SURRENDER ANY OF THEIR FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES. IN SITTING DOWN AT A CONFERENCE WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND I HOPE THAT WE ARE BEGINNING A NEW ERA OF TRUST AND COOPERATION BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH. SUCH COOPERATION CAN BE ACHIEVED WITHOUT ANY SURRENDER OF POLITICAL PRINCIPLES.

I SHOULD HOWEVER MAKE IT CLEAR THAT A SUBSTANTIAL MAJORITY OF PEOPLE IN N I RESENT THE CLAIM IN THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TERRITORIAL RIGHTS OVER THE PROVINCE. THEY ALSO RESENT THE APPARENT FAILURE IN THE FIELD OF EXTRADITION WHEREBY FUGITIVES FROM N I WHO ARE ALLEGED TO HAVE COMMITTED CRIMES WITH POLITICAL MOTIVATION CAN ESCAPE JUSTICE. THESE ARE ISSUES WHICH WILL HAVE TO BE DISCUSSED AT THIS CONFERENCE AND A BASIS FOR A SOLUTION FOUND.

I AM HOWEVER CONVINCED THAT MUTUAL TRUST BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH CAN BEST BE BUILT UP THROUGH THE CONSTITUTION OF A COUNCIL OF IRELAND AND THAT CONSTITUTION CAN BE USED TO FURTHER THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITION OF ALL THE PEOPLE IN OUR ISLAND.

PERGAPS THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS FACING NORTHERN IRELAND TODAY IS THE ERADICATION OF POLITICALLY INSPIRED CRIME. THIS PROBLEM CAN NOT BE SOLVED WITHOUT THE FULL COOPERATION OF THE GOVERNMENTS IN BOTH PARTS OF OUR ISLAND. I HAVE GREAT HOPE THAT THIS CONFERENCE MAY AGREE MEASURES WHICH CAN COMMENCE THE TASK OF THE FINAL ELIMINATION OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE.

MB 6/12/73

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