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The Alliance Party of Northern Ireland

Alliance

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“ P R E S S R E L E A S E ”

"Agreement in Sight" - Alderdice

Following an hour long meeting between an Alliance delegation and the Taoiseach John Bruton, the Alliance Leader John Alderdice said:

"Coming after my meeting with Prime Minister John Major earlier this week, this was a very fruitful meeting. Our major concern is to do everything possible to ensure that the All Party Talks beginning on June 10 are as inclusive and as successful as possible. There are of course a number of matters, both practical and otherwise, which might helpfully be resolved before June 10 and indeed some matters on which agreement does need to be achieved in advance of that date. However after my meetings this week, I am convinced that the necessary agreement between the two governments can, and will, be achieved before the start date of the talks.

"The question of Sinn Fein's participation depends entirely on an IRA ceasefire and that is of course something over which none of the rest of us can have great influence. I earnestly hope that the talks will begin with all the Parties present, but proceed they must, and those who rule themselves out of participation on day one may have to run hard to catch us up thereafter."

Notes: The Alliance Party delegation included the Party Leader Dr John Alderdice, Deputy Leader Seamus Close, Chief Whip Sean Neeson, Chair Steve McBride and Vice Chair Eileen Bell. The Irish Government was represented by the Taoiseach John Bruton, Pat Rabbit and Mervyn Taylor, as well as DFA officials.

In case of enquiries, contact Press Officer, Paul McErlean - 0468 151972