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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

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### “Settlement: a Transition to Stability” - Alderdice delivers key speech

The Alliance Leader Lord Alderdice is in London tonight addressing the Annual Dinner of the John Stuart Mill Institute, a liberal think-tank. In his speech, the title of which is “A Liberal Future for Northern Ireland”, Lord Alderdice will describe the settlement as a necessary step in the transition to a more tolerant and stable Northern Ireland, but will warn that the whole project could yet come apart if the elections to the Assembly produce extremes that are too strong or a centre that is not strong enough.

John Alderdice will say:

“The purpose of the Agreement, which was achieved with such effort and persistence, is to establish the foundation for a liberal and tolerant society where everyone can feel at home in their own place, but it is only a start.

“Northern Ireland’s society remains deeply and bitterly divided. Unionists - even pro-Agreement ones, will support Orange parades no matter what. Nationalists - even in the SDLP, will remain ambivalent about policing for a long time to come. Prisoner releases and paramilitary control of working class estates are profoundly divisive issues that will not go away quietly.

“The settlement ensures that no side can ride roughshod over the sensitivities of others. But unless Alliance can establish a strong presence in the Assembly and at the Cabinet table the whole process will begin to come apart under the divisive stress and strain of institutionalised sectarianism. This settlement can be a transition to a new and stable Northern Ireland, or it can be a mere interlude in our ancient feud.”

#### NOTES:

Tonight’s dinner is being held in the national Liberal Club in London, commencing at 7.30pm.

For further information contact Lord Alderdice on 01893 049490 (pager) or Richard Good, Press Officer, on 0468 151972 (mobile) or 01426 245779 (pager).