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SECRETARY OF STATE'S SPEECH IN NORTHERN IRELAND DEBATE ON
THURSDAY 22 NOVEMBER 1973

THIS AFTERNOON I INTEND TO SET OUT IN DETAIL TO THE HOUSE THE RESULTS OF RECENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS AND DISCUSSIONS. IT IS HOWEVER IMPORTANT TO SEE THESE IN THE CORRECT PERSPECTIVE OF THE GENERAL SITUATION OF NORTHERN IRELAND. SERIOUS ACTS OF VIOLENCE CONTINUE NOR ARE THOSE CONFINED TO ANY ONE GROUP OF TERRORISTS OR CRIMINALS. OUR PRIMARY TASK THEREFORE MUST BE TO ERADICATE VIOLENCE FROM THE COMMUNITY AND OF COURSE THE REASONS BEHIND IT. THE ERADICATION OF VIOLENCE IS A MAJOR TASK FOR OUR SECURITY FORCES—POLICE AND ARMY. THEIR ACHIEVEMENT IN THE PURSUIT OF TERRORISTS AND CRIMINALS AND IN THE DETECTION OF CRIME ARE VERY IMPRESSIVE BUT NO ONE SHOULD BE UNDER ANY DELUSIONS, STILL MORE HAS TO BE DONE. IN THIS WORK OUR SECURITY FORCES DESERVE ALL THE SUPPORT THAT CAN BE GIVEN TO THEM, CERTAINLY THEIR BEARING AND MORALE IS BEYOND PRAISE. BUT JUST AS IT IS TRUE THAT POLITICAL ACTIONS CANNOT CURE VIOLENCE SO IT IS EQUALLY CERTAIN THAT WE OWE IT TO OUR SECURITY FORCES TO PROVIDE THE BEST FOUNDATIONS FOR THEIR WORK. THAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF THE CONSTITUTION ACT PASSED WITH THE OVERWHELMING SUPPORT OF THIS HOUSE AND WHICH PROVIDES THE BASIS OF WHAT I HAVE TO SAY THIS AFTERNOON.

NOW THAT THE FIRST STAGE OF THE CONSULTATIONS LEADING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DEVOLVED GOVERNMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND HAVE BEEN BROUGHT TO A CONCLUSION, IT IS RIGHT THAT I SHOULD REPORT TO THE HOUSE THE NATURE OF THE AGREEMENTS WHICH HAVE SO FAR BEEN REACHED. THE HOUSE SHOULD BE THE FIRST TO KNOW THE FULL NATURE OF THESE AGREEMENTS AND I AM GRATEFUL TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND PARTIES CONCERNED FOR REFRAINING FROM COMMENT UNTIL I HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY THIS AFTERNOON TO DISCLOSE THE DETAILS OF THOSE AGREEMENTS. OVER THE LAST SEVEN WEEKS, I HAVE HAD A SERIES OF INTENSIVE DISCUSSIONS IN NORTHERN IRELAND WITH THE ALLIANCE PARTY, THE SDLP AND THE ULSTER UNIONIST PARTY.

THE NORTHERN IRELAND LABOUR PARTY WHILE SUPPORTING THIS PRINCIPLE OF THE CONSTITUTION ACT, AGREED THAT I SHOULD CONFINE MY SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION TO THE 3 PARTIES. ALL THE OTHER PARTIES IN THE NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY HAD PREVIOUSLY MADE IT KNOWN TO MYSELF THE PRIME MINISTER AND TO ME IN DISCUSSIONS THAT THEY WERE NOT PREPARED TO PARTICIPATE IN AN EXECUTIVE. THE THREE PARTIES WITH WHOM I HAVE BEEN IN DISCUSSION WERE, HOWEVER, PREPARED TO OPERATE THE NORTHERN IRELAND CONSTITUTION ACT AND HAD INDICATED THEIR WILLINGNESS TO SEARCH FOR A BASIS ON WHICH AN EXECUTIVE MIGHT BE FORMED WITHIN THE PROVISIONS OF THAT ACT. I AM GRATEFUL FOR THE FOREBEARANCE OF THE HOUSE IN ACCEPTING THAT IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT THESE TALKS SHOULD BE CONDUCTED ON THE BASIS OF CONFIDENTIALITY AND I SHOULD ALSO LIKE TO PAY TRIBUTE TO THE SPIRIT IN WHICH THE PARTY LEADERS AND THE DELEGATIONS HELD TO THEIR INITIAL AGREEMENT THAT CONFIDENTIALITY SHOULD BE MAINTAINED. IT IS NOW MY DUTY TO GIVE THE HOUSE AN ACCOUNT OF THE TALKS AND OF THEIR CONCLUSION.

Right Hon. Friend

THROUGHOUT I HAVE HAD THREE OBJECTIVES IN MIND. THE FIRST IS THAT ANY AGREEMENT REACHED MUST BE WITHIN THE TERMS OF THE CONSTITUTION ACT AND THE PARTIES CONCERNED AGREED FROM THE OUTSET THAT THE TALKS SHOULD BE ON THIS BASIS. THIS REQUIRES ME IN DUE COURSE TO BRING BEFORE PARLIAMENT THE DRAFT OF AN ORDER IN COUNCIL DEVOLVING POWERS TO THE EXECUTIVE AND ASSEMBLY. TO DO SO, TWO REQUIREMENTS MUST BE FULFILLED. FIRST, THE NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY MUST HAVE MADE SATISFACTORY PROVISION BY ITS STANDING ORDERS IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 25 OF THE ACT WHICH LAYS DOWN CERTAIN ESSENTIALS AND PROCEDURE.

THE FIRST STATUTORY REQUIREMENT HAS BEEN MET IN THAT THE STANDING ORDERS OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY HAVE NOW BEEN PASSED, AND I AM SATISFIED THAT THEY CONFORM WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF SECTION 21 (A) OF THE CONSTITUTION ACT. SOME OF THE STANDING ORDERS WERE THE SUBJECT OF DEBATE AND DISAGREEMENT, BUT I AM ONLY REQUIRED IN CONSIDERING THE STANDING ORDERS TO SATISFY MYSELF THAT THEY CONTAIN THE PROVISIONS SPECIFIED IN THE ACT.

SECOND, THERE IS A REQUIREMENT "THAT A NORTHERN IRELAND EXECUTIVE CAN BE FORMED WHICH, HAVING REGARD TO THE SUPPORT IT COMMANDS IN THE ASSEMBLY AND TO THE ELECTORATE ON WHICH THAT SUPPORT IS BASED, IS LIKELY TO BE WIDELY ACCEPTED THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY".

CLEARLY THERE MUST BE A LARGE MEASURE OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE PARTIES ON MAJOR POLICY ISSUES, THOSE PARTIES HAVING MADE KNOWN THEIR POSITION, MUST DECLARE THEIR WILLINGNESS TO WORK TOGETHER AND TO BRING ABOUT THE PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS NECESSARY FOR THAT PURPOSE. AN AIM OF MY TALKS WAS, THEREFORE, TO USE MY BEST ENDEAVOURS TO BRING ABOUT THE MAXIMUM POSSIBLE MEASURE OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE PARTIES.

THIRD -AND MOST IMPORTANT -H M G. HAVE TO KEEP IN MIND THEIR CONTINUING RESPONSIBILITY TO THIS HOUSE, IF THE DEVOLUTION ORDER IS TO BE MADE, FOR THOSE MATTERS IN NORTHERN IRELAND WHICH CONTINUE, FOR THE TIME BEING AT LEAST, TO BE RESERVED TO WESTMINSTER.

ONE OF OUR PURPOSES IN DIVIDING RESPONSIBILITY FOR GOVERNMENT AND ADMINISTRATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND BETWEEN THE ASSEMBLY AND EXECUTIVE ON THE ONE HAND, AND PARLIAMENT HERE AND HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT ON THE OTHER, WAS TO REDUCE AS FAR AS POSSIBLE THE NUMBER OF CONTENTIOUS ISSUES WHICH MIGHT MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR THE PARTIES IN NORTHERN IRELAND TO REACH AGREEMENT. I AM GLAD TO SAY THAT WE HAVE MADE A GOOD START IN ACHIEVING THIS OBJECT. ALL THREE PARTIES HAVE REACHED AGREEMENT ON A STATEMENT OF AIMS AND POLICIES IN THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SPHERE. THIS ACHIEVEMENT SHOULD NOT BE UNDERRATED BECAUSE THERE ARE BIG DIFFERENCES OF APPROACH AND PHILOSOPHY ON SOME OF THESE MATTERS BETWEEN THE PARTIES IN NORTHERN IRELAND JUST AS THERE ARE BETWEEN THE PARTIES IN THIS HOUSE. BUT AS I SAY, THESE DIFFERENCES HAVE BEEN RESOLVED BY GOOD SENSE, A SPIRIT OF COMPROMISE AND A WILLINGNESS TO PUT THE WELFARE AND PROSPERITY OF ALL THE PEOPLE OF NORTHERN IRELAND IN THE FOREFRONT. HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT HAVE TAKEN NOTE OF THESE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AIMS AND, WHILE OUR POSITION MUST BE RESERVED AS TO THE FINANCIAL OR OTHER SUPPORT WHICH WE WILL BE PREPARED TO GIVE TO ANY PARTICULAR ELEMENT OF THE PROGRAMME, IT IS THE FIRM INTENTION OF HMG TO AFFORD SIGNIFICANT ASSISTANCE TO NORTHERN IRELAND IN ITS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL REHABILITATION.

IT WAS THIS WILLINGNESS TO REACH AGREEMENT THAT CREATED A SITUATION AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS WEEK IN WHICH IT WAS POSSIBLE FOR THE PARTIES TO CONSIDER BOTH WITH ME AND AMONG THEMSELVES THE POSSIBILITY OF AGREEING TO FORM AN EXECUTIVE. IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN UNDERSTOOD AMONG THE PARTIES THAT IT WOULD BE IN NO-ONE'S INTEREST TO FORM AN EXECUTIVE UNTIL THERE IS AN AGREEMENT ON ALL THE ISSUES UNDER DISCUSSION. THE MAJOR MATTER OUTSTANDING IS THE COUNCIL OF IRELAND WHICH OF COURSE INVOLVES THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND AND WE HOPE SON THAT THOSE PARTIES WHICH HAVE SIGNIFIED THEIR WILLINGNESS TO SERVE IN THE NORTHERN IRELAND EXECUTIVE WILL MEET WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF HMG AND THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND TO DISCUSS HOW A COUNCIL OF IRELAND MIGHT BE SET UP. I WILL SAY MORE ON THIS LATER. THE INTENTION IS THAT THIS PRELIMINARY CONFERENCE WILL LEAD TO THE FORMAL APPOINTMENT OF A NORTHERN IRELAND EXECUTIVE AND, SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL OF PARLIAMENT, TO THE DEVOLUTION OF FULL POWERS TO THAT EXECUTIVE AND TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY. THE COMPOSITION AND NATURE OF SUCH AN EXECUTIVE HAS NOW BEEN AGREED. I REMINDED THE HOUSE EARLIER OF THE NATURE OF THE SUPPORT WHICH THE ACT MAKEUXA PRE-REQUISITE TO SECTION OF HE ACT IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE TO APPOINT PERSONS TO HOLD OFFICE UNDER THE NEW STRUCTURE. UNDER SECTION 8 OF THE CONSTITUTION ACT THE SECRETARY OF STATE IS RESTRICTED TO TWELVE SUCH APPOINTMENTS, NOT ALL OF WHICH HAVE TO BE WITHIN THE EXECUTIVE. WHEN WE CAME TO THE DISCUSSIONS, WE FOUND THIS PARTICULAR PROVISION SOMEWHAT RESTRICTIVE. THERE IS NO INTENTION ON MY PART OR ON THE PART OF THE PARTIES CONCERNED TO INCREASE THE SIZE OF THE EXECUTIVE. ON THE CONTRARY, IT IS THAT THE EXECUTIVE SHOULD BE CONFINED BOTH NOW AND FOR THE FUTURE TO ELEVEN PERSONS. BOTH IF THIS IS SO, THERE NEEDS TO BE SOME FLEXIBILITY IN MAKING ADDITIONAL APPOINTMENTS OUTSIDE THE EXECUTIVE AND THE AGREEMENT WHICH HAS BEEN REACHED WILL - IF THIS HOUSE AGREES SINCE FURTHER LEGISLATION WILL BE REQUIRED - INVOLVE AN EXECUTIVE OF ELEVEN AND AN ADMINISTRATION OF FIFTEEN. THE EXECUTIVE WILL COMPRISE SIX MEMBER OF THE ULSTER UNIONIST PARTY, FOUR OF THE SDLP AND ONE OF THE ALLIANCE PARTY. MR BRIAN FAULKNER IS THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE DESIGNATE AND MR FITT WILL BE THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER DESIGNATE. MR OLIVER NAPIER WILL BE THE LEGAL MEMBER AND IN CHARGE OF THE OFFICE OF LAW REFORM. MAY I CONGRATULATE THEM ON THESE APPOINTMENTS.

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THE FURTHER ALLOCATION IS AS FOLLOWS:

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OFFICE OF	
THE EX PLANNING	
AND CO-ORD	SDLP

THE LEADERS OF THE PARTIES WILL NOMINATE THOSE WHOM THEY PROPOSE WILL BE APPOINTED TO THESE POSTS.

THERE WILL IN ADDITION BE A DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP OUTSIDE THE ADMINISTRATION WHO WILL BE A N ASSEMBLY MEMBER OF THE ALLIANCE PARTY..

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NEXT I COME TO THE COUNCIL OF IRELAND. IN THE WHITE PAPER WHICH THE GOVERNMENT PUBLISHED IN MARCH THIS YEAR, WE SAID THAT THE UNITED KINGDOM FAVOURED AND WAS PREPARED TO FACILITATE THE FORMATION OF SUCH A BODY. WE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT, IF A COUNCIL OF IRELAND WAS TO BE MORE THAN A MERE STATUTORY CONCEPT AND BECOME A USEFUL WORKING MECHANISM IN NORTH/SOUTH RELATIONS, IT MUST OPERATE WITH THE CONSENT OF BOTH MAJORITY AND MINORITY OPINION IN NORTHERN IRELAND WHO HAVE A RIGHT TO PRIOR CONSULTATION AND INVOLVEMENT IN THE PROCESS OF DETERMINING ITS FORM, FUNCTIONS AND PROCEDURE. BECAUSE AGREEMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND ITSELF IS A NECESSARY PRECONDITION TO A SUCCESSFUL COUNCIL OF IRELAND, HMG HAS UP TO NOW REFRAINED FROM EXPRESSING A VIEW ON THE FORM A COUNCIL MIGHT TAKE. XX BUT IN THE LIGHT OF DISCUSSION WHICH I HAVE HAD, IT SEEMS TO ME NOW TO BE HELPFUL TO SAY T// WHAT PROPOSITIONS ABOUT A COUNCIL OF IRELAND WE WOULD BE PREPARED TO AGREE AND TO AND SUPPORT IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC WHICH MUST SHORTLY BE UNDERTAKEN.

IT HAS BECOME CLEAR IN MY TALKS THAT THERE IS A GENERAL WISH THAT A COUNCIL OF IRELAND SHOULD BE CONFINED TO REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NORTH AND SOUTH OF IRELAND - THAT IS TO SAY THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UK GOVERNMENT ON THE COUNCIL. THIS IS ACCEPTABLE TO HMG AS REGARDS DEVOLVED SUBJECTS, ALTHOUGH ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE NECESSARY TO SAFEGUARD HMG'S INTERESTS IN THE AREAS OF FINANCE AND OTHER / RESERVED SUBJECTS.

AS TO STRUCTURE, HMG THINKS THAT THE COUNCIL SHOULD CONSIST NOT ONLY OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC AND OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND EXECUTIVE - THAT IS, AT GOVERNMENTAL LEVEL - BUT ALSO, ON A SEPARATE ADVISORY AND CONSULTATIVE LEVEL, OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE PARTIES FROM THE DAIL (DOYLE) AND THE NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY. WE ALSO THINK THAT THE COUNCIL SHOULD HAVE ITS OWN SECRETARIAT.

IN ORDER THAT DECISIONS OF THE COUNCIL SHOULD CARRY THE GREATEST POSSIBLE DEGREE OF SUPPORT AMONG THE PEOPLE OF THE NORTH AND THE SOUTH WE THINK THAT ITS DECISIONS AT GOVERNMENTAL LEVEL SHOULD BE TAKEN ON A BASIS OF UNANIMITY.

IN ADDITION TO THOSE FUNCTIONS OPERATING IN THE AREA OF SUBJECTS WHICH WILL BE DEVOLVED TO AN EXECUTIVE, WE THINK THAT THE COUNCIL SHOULD BE ABLE TO PLAY A USEFUL ROLE IN RELATION TO CERTAIN SUBJECTS RESERVED FOR THE TIME BEING TO THE UK GOVERNMENT. IF THIS WERE TO HAPPEN, HMG WOULD, OF COURSE, NEED TO BE REPRESENTED ON THE COUNCIL, AT LEAST WHEN THESE SUBJECTS WERE UNDER DISCUSSION. WHAT OUR ROLE SHOULD BE AND HOW UK INTERESTS SHOULD BE REPRESENTED IS A MATTER WHICH NEEDS TO BE AGREED, BUT THERE IS A SCOPE HERE WHICH CAN BRING GREAT ADVANTAGE TO BOTH NORTH AND SOUTH, PARTICULARLY IN THE VITAL AREA OF SECURITY. THERE HAS BEEN INTRODUCED IN THE TALKS THE IMAGINATIVE AND IMPORTANT CONCEPT OF A COMMON LAW ENFORCEMENT AREA, AND WE THINK THAT THERE SHOULD BE DISCUSSIONS ON THIS AND ON THE QUESTION OF EXTRADITION PROCESSES AND WHAT ROLE THE COUNCIL MIGHT PLAY IN THE LAW AND ORDER FIELD. IT WOULD BE A CLEAR ADVANTAGE TO ALL SIDES IF ADVANCES CAN BE MADE IN THE LAW AND ORDER FIELD WHICH WILL BRING TO BEAR ALL THE RESOURCES OF THE NORTH AND THE SOUTH TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM OF TERRORISM AND IF IMAGINATIVE ARRANGEMENTS CAN BE MADE BOTH OF A JUDICIAL AND ORGANISATIONAL KIND.

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NOW I MUST TURN TO WHAT IS BEING CALLED A TRIPARTITE CONFERENCE. IF WE ARE TO MAKE THE ADVANCES ON A COUNCIL OF IRELAND TO WHICH I HAVE REFERRED, IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THERE SHOULD NOW BE URGENT DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND AND THOSE PERSONS WHO WILL BE MEMBERS OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND EXECUTIVE. THIS CONFERENCE WILL BE HELD AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, AND WILL, I HOPE, REACH A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING. I ALSO INTEND TO INVITE // INVITE THE LEADERS OF THOSE PARTIES IN THE NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY WHO HAVE INDICATED THAT THEY ARE NOT PREPARED TO PARTICIPATE IN AN EXECUTIVE TO DISCUSS THEIR VIEWS ON A COUNCIL OF IRELAND WITH ME SO THESE WILL BE KNOWN AT THE TIME OF A CONFERENCE. IT WILL BE NECESSARY THEREAFTER TO HOLD A FORMAL CONFERENCE BETWEEN HMG, THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC AND THE NORTHERN IRELAND EXECUTIVE, WHICH WILL HAVE BEEN APPOINTED BY THEN.

MY TALKS WITH THE PARTIES ALSO COVERED OTHER MATTERS WHICH ARE OF INTEREST TO THE PEOPLE OF NORTHERN IRELAND.

AS FAR AS POLICING IS CONCERNED, HMG HAS MADE CLEAR THAT THE RUC WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE THE POLICE SERVICE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND. THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO STATED THAT ITS AIM IS TO ACHIEVE THE ENDING OF POLITICALLY MOTIVATED VIOLENCE FROM WHATEVER SOURCE, TO ENSURE THAT THERE IS EFFECTIVE POLICING THROUGHOUT NORTHERN IRELAND SO THAT THE ARMY CAN BE PROGRESSIVELY WITHDRAWN FROM ITS PRESENT ROLE, AND TO BRING ABOUT A SITUATION IN WHICH PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THE POLICE AND IDENTIFICATION WITH IT ARE ESSENTIAL PARTS OF EFFECTIVE POLICING. NO SINGLE SET OF PROPOSALS IS LIKELY TO ACHIEVE THESE AIMS OVERNIGHT - TIME WILL BE NECESSARY. THE FULL COOPERATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC IS ESSENTIAL IN THIS TASK.

ANOTHER OF THESE MATTERS WAS DETENTION. IN THE SUMMER OF THIS YEAR, PARLIAMENT PASSED THE NORTHERN IRELAND (EMERGENCY PROVISIONS) ACT WHICH, AS THE HOUSE WILL REMEMBER, WAS BASED ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE UNDER LORD DIPLOCK AND ALSO HAD AS MEMBERS PROFESSOR SIR RUPERT CROSS, MR GEORGE WOODCOCK AND SIR KENNETH YOUNGER. THESE PROVISIONS ARE SUBJECT TO ANNUAL REVIEW. IT IS UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THAT ACT THAT PEOPLE ARE DETAINED IN NORTHERN IRELAND BY INDEPENDENT COMMISSIONERS. I HAVE DURING THE TALKS REAFFIRMED H M G 'S FIRM VIEW THAT THEY WILL BRING DETENTION FOR ALL SECTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY TO AN END AS SOON AS THE SECURITY SITUATION PERMITS AND AS PART OF THEIR WISH TO BRING ABOUT A LASTING PEACE. THE VERY REAL POLITICAL PROGRESS MADE IN RECENT WEEKS, AND THE DESIRE OF THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF PEOPLE IN NORTHERN IRELAND FOR PEACE, BRING HOPE THAT THE MEN OF VIOLENCE WILL BE INCREASINGLY ISOLATED AND REJECTED AND THE SECURITY SITUATION FURTHER IMPROVED. THE EMERGENCY PROVISIONS ACT VESTS IN THE SECRETARY OF STATE EXECUTIVE POWER TO RELEASE DETAINEES, AND IT IS MY WISH TO SEE PROGRESS NOT ONLY IN A SECURITY SITUATION BUT ALSO IN PARALLEL WITH IT A PROGRESSIVE REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF PERSONS DETAINED. AS AN EARNEST OF THIS, I HOPE TO BE ABLE TO BRING INTO USE MY STATUTORY POWERS OF SELECTIVE RELEASE. IF THE SECURITY SITUATION PERMITS, I INTEND TO DO SO IN TIME FOR A NUMBER OF DETAINEES TO BE RELEASED BEFORE CHRISTMAS. THOSE RELEASED MAY BE REQUIRED TO GIVE A SUITABLE UNDERTAKING ABOUT THEIR FUTURE CONDUCT. BUT I MUST EMPHASISE THAT EXECUTIVE DECISIONS ON RELEASES MUST DEPEND ON THE SECURITY SITUATION. CONTINUED PROGRESS WILL THEREFORE OBVIOUSLY DEPEND ON FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS IN THE SECURITY SITUATION GENERALLY. IN THE MEANTIME, THE PROCEDURES FOR REVIEW PROVIDED BY THE NORTHERN IRELAND (EMERGENCY PROVISIONS) ACT 1973 HAVE ALREADY LED TO SOME RELEASES. THESE REVIEWS WILL CONTINUE. I SHOULD ALSO STRESS THAT EVERYTHING POSSIBLE IS BEING DONE TO BRING PERSONS SUSPECTED OF TERRORIST OFFENCES BEFORE THE COURTS RATHER THAN TO DETAIN THEM UNDER THE EMERGENCY PROVISIONS ACT. I HAVE ALSO UNDERTAKEN TO CONSIDER COMPASSIONATE CASES ON A WIDER BASIS THAN HITHERTO. AND OTHER PREPARATORY MEASURES ARE IN HAND INCLUDING THE RECRUITMENT OF MORE SOCIAL WORKERS TO HELP WITH THE ADMINISTRATION OF ALL THESE ARRANGEMENTS AND THE INTRODUCTION OF VARIOUS TRAINING SCHEMES.

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE HON MEMBER FOR LEEDS SOUTH AND THE HON MEMBER FOR SALFORD EAST FOR THE UNDERSTANDING, HELP AND PROPERLY CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM WHICH THEY HAVE GIVEN TO ME. BUT LET US ALL BE QUITE CLEAR THIS IS NOT A TIME FOR SELF-CONGRATULATION. WE HAVE SET OUT UPON A VERY DIFFICULT OPERATION. THERE ARE THOSE IN THIS HOUSE AND OUTSIDE WHO ARE CONVINCED THAT WE SHALL FAIL AND INDEED ARE DETERMINED THAT WE SHOULD DO SO. THEY ARE CLEARLY ENTITLED TO PURSUE THEIR AIMS BY CONSTITUTIONAL MEANS BUT DO NOT LET THEM BLUR THE LINE BETWEEN THAT AND FORCE.

WE HAVE MADE A START, I BELIEVE A GOOD START. I APPLAUD THE STATESMANSHIP OF THOSE WHO, DESPITE THEIR DIFFERENCES OF THE PAST, ARE NOW TURNING TO WORK TOGETHER FOR THE FUTURE GOOD OF THEIR COMMUNITY. THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE IN NORTHERN IRELAND, IN THE REST OF THE UNITED KINGDOM AND INDEED THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, WHO WILL WISH THEM EVERY SUCCESS.

END OF STATEMENTTTTTT

V22/11/73