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ALLIANCE

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NEWS RELEASE

From: John Cushnahan

1 August 1980

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EMBARGOED 12.30 PM

An Alliance delegation today (Friday) met The Secretary of State Rt Hon Humphrey Atkins. The party submitted a policy document to the Secretary of State which outlined the detailed reaction of the Alliance party to HMG's recent proposals. In an accompanying statement Alliance Party leader Oliver Napier said:

"When The Secretary of State's proposals were first published I indicated that after having had time to study the document we would issue a detailed comment on the various proposals contained in it. Today I submitted a detailed policy statement to The Secretary of State.

In this document the Alliance party states its clear preference for option I (proportional Executive) which we believe offers the best opportunity for going forward and we are prepared to enter into further discussions on the important matters of detail relating to it.

On the other hand, we do not believe that option 2 has any real contribution to make in guaranteeing full participation and therefore encouraging identification with and full community support for any new institutions. For this reason we are opposed to it and do not see any merit in discussing it further.

Although I am conscious of the obstacles that lie in the path of agreement I sincerely hope that the present discussions may prove fruitful. Given the massive social and economic problems that confront us at the present time such as unemployment, poverty, and inferior housing, an agreed devolved government could provide the means whereby united we could tackle these problems head on in a determined way. We can't afford to let opportunities like this slip away."

ENDS.

NOTE: Mr Napier was accompanied by Mr David Cook (Deputy Leader), John Cushnahan (General Secretary), Seamus Close (Party Chairman), and Councillor Denis Loretto.

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cc Mr Napier