

Congressman Michael C. Burgess, M.D.
Opening Statement
Hearing: “Prerequisites for Progress in Northern Ireland”
March 21, 2012

Thank you Mr. Chairman for the recognition and for calling this hearing. Thank you to our witnesses for being here today.

Today we will discuss the challenges to the Good Friday Agreement, peace in Northern Ireland, and what needs to happen so that people there and abroad can be confident in the peace process. We will also discuss how past crimes can be addressed, and we will hear from the family of one of the victims and people who are intimately familiar with the situation.

In 2006, I voted for a resolution introduced by our Chairman Chris Smith offering condolences for the murder of Patrick Finucane and calling on the British government to implement an independent inquiry into the death of Mr. Finucane. Although Prime Minister David Cameron has offered an apology on behalf of the British government, as Mr. Finucane’s family knows, this will never erase the tragic events that occurred. We must go forward, working to ensure that terrible things like this do not happen again. I look forward to hearing from my colleagues and the witnesses about what steps need to be taken in the future to prevent further wrongdoing.

I thank Chairman Smith for holding this hearing and I yield back.