



Minister of State

Forward to Almond

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Professor Monica McWilliams
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Dear Professor McWilliams,

As you know, the Review will commence on 6 September. It will focus on how to overcome the practical difficulties in implementing the three principles agreed by all parties on 25 June: an inclusive Executive exercising devolved powers; decommissioning of all paramilitary weapons by May 2000 and; decommissioning to be carried out in a manner determined by the Independent Commission on Decommissioning.

The Review represents our best chance to find a way through the current political impasse. I think it would be helpful for me to meet all of the parties before the Review to provide details of the practical arrangements we have made for it. I hope that I may also then be in a position to advise you of Senator Mitchell's thoughts on how he wishes to conduct the Review. A meeting would also provide a useful opportunity to identify the current state of thinking of each of the participants. This would be very helpful to me personally and, I believe, would be of assistance in focusing all our minds ahead of the Review. I would be interested to hear your views on how what themes and issues you think will emerge from debate on the implementation of the three principles. In addition, it would be useful to discuss where you see points of convergence between parties and where you believe there will be differences, large or small. At the



conclusion of the meetings I would propose to advise Senator Mitchell of the issues identified.

My office will be in contact with you to agree a date and time convenient to us both.

Sincerely
George Howarth

GEORGE HOWARTH MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State