



Minister of State

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Dear David,

Over the past week we have had a number of discussions about the paper headed "Possible Draft Package for Resolving Decommissioning before the Election" which I gave you in confidence on 27 January.

As I explained at the time, the draft was intended as a vehicle for exploring whether various concepts might have a contribution to make towards finding a basis for agreement in the talks. If you had been ready to proceed we would have been very willing to explore with others whether those concepts were likely to prove acceptable to them.

I much appreciate the fact that we have been able to conduct this exercise on a basis of confidentiality: that has enabled us to be frank with each other and avoided any need for us - or others - to take public positions on the points covered in the paper.

However, as it is now clear that the concepts in the paper, taken as a whole, do not provide a basis on which you feel able to proceed at this time, I am writing to confirm that we will not be pursuing them further and that the paper is therefore "off the table" so far as we are concerned.

*Yours sincerely
Michael*

THE RT HON MICHAEL ANCRAM QC DL MP
MINISTER OF STATE FOR POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

TALKS/2762