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## PROPOSITIONS ON HEADS OF AGREEMENT

Balanced constitutional change, based on commitment to the principle of consent in all its aspects by both British and Irish Governments; to include both changes to the Irish Constitution and to British constitutional legislation.

Democratically elected institutions in Northern Ireland, to include a Northern Ireland Assembly, elected by a system of proportional representation, exercising devolved executive and legislative responsibility over at least the responsibilities of the six Northern Ireland Departments, and with provisions to ensure that all sections of the community can participate and work together successfully in the operation of these institutions and that all sections of the community are protected.

A new British-Irish Agreement to replace the existing Anglo-Irish Agreement and help establish close co-operation and enhance relationships, embracing:

- An intergovernmental Council to deal with the totality of relationships, to include representatives of the British and Irish Governments, the Northern Ireland Administration and the devolved institutions in Scotland and Wales, with meetings twice a year at Summit level.
- A North/South Ministerial Council to bring together those with executive responsibilities in Northern Ireland and the Irish Government in particular areas. Each side will consult, co-operate and take decisions on matters of mutual interest within the mandate of, and accountable to, the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Oireachtas respectively. All decisions will be by agreement between the two sides, North and South.
- Suitable implementation bodies and mechanisms for policies agreed by the North/South Council in meaningful areas and at an all-island level.
- Standing intergovernmental machinery between the Irish and British Governments, covering issues of mutual interest, including non-devolved issues for Northern Ireland, when representatives of the Northern Ireland Administration would be involved.

Provision to safeguard the rights of both communities in Northern Ireland, through arrangements for the comprehensive protection of fundamental human, civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights, including a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland supplementing the provisions of the European Convention and to achieve full respect for the principles of equity of treatment and freedom from discrimination, and the cultural



identity and ethos of both communities. Appropriate steps to ensure an equivalent level of protection in the Republic.

Effective and practical measures to establish and consolidate an acceptable peaceful society, dealing with issues such as prisoners, security in all its aspects, policing and decommissioning of weapons.

#### PRIME MINISTER'S PRESS CONFERENCE: NORTHERN IRELAND

I attach the joint statement and Heads of Agreement issued today by Mo Mowlam and David Andrews.

So far it has gone better than we had expected. None of the parties have rejected the Heads of Agreement out of hand. John Hume has described them as a welcome beginning. Trimble has said that there are bits that they do not like and bits that they do. It is important to move forward. The Alliance have welcomed it as pain and gain for some parties but all gain for them. The UDP and DUP have been united. Gerry Adams had to leave to be with his family relating to the death.

In the talks they have agreed to meet in plenary at 2.00 tomorrow afternoon to start discussing the way forward. Mo and the NIO are cautiously optimistic that we may make progress.

The message the Prime Minister needs to get across is that this is an important step forward. It is a balanced document representing the two Governments' best guess of what all sides might be able to live with. It should be looked at as a whole. And we hope this will enable the talks to move forward towards an agreement to be put to a referendum by the deadline in May.