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PRIME MINISTER

From: John Holmes
Date: 27 February 1998

I attach a draft note from the NIO, covering their first attempt at an overall Settlement Paper. Mo has not seen this, and would have a fit if she knew you were seeing it before her. But I wanted you to see it over the weekend. So please do not mention to her that you have seen it. We should get it officially on Monday.

The draft follows closely the Propositions Paper, and is in similarly summary style. There is a lot of good stuff in it, but some obvious problems too, not least in the light of your latest meeting with Trimble. I have made some comments in the margin. You should incidentally also look at the commentary behind the text, which usefully explains why some things are there.

Overall it is not a bad effort, and gives a chance to see what a settlement might look like. But my guess is that the Irish draft will be much fuller and indeed may not bear much resemblance to this, at least in appearance.

On process, I am not sure we should go along with getting quite so much text on the table in the Talks quite as quickly as Mo wants. We need to do some more pre-negotiation first, particularly with Trimble. She also continues to hanker after not giving the UUP any preferential treatment - OK in an ideal world but not realistic.

No. They must understand that with suitable amendment to be more friendly in formative with SPLP & SF, Propositions is the only way to go.

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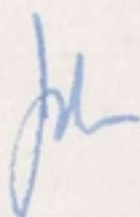
*Like you:
I think this is rather good.
My suggestion is: we should amend
slightly to remove any drivers
defects & begin
to all state, square 2
false first. But actually, from
the will print of news,
it's a hell of a
better than
framework*

*File
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This is a very quick note. I will have a closer look over the weekend. We should discuss on Monday.



JOHN HOLMES

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