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HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Rt. Hon. Tony Blair MP  
The Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON

23 February 1998

*Dear Prime Minister,*

At the meeting I had with you at Downing Street on 15 January 1998, the Secretary of State handed me a brown envelope which she claimed contained documents which would unambiguously establish that the current policy of the government was entirely divorced from the "dual strategy" for Irish unity set out in the 1988 Labour Party policy document "Towards a United Ireland Reform and Harmonisation - a Dual Strategy for Irish Unification", co-authored by Dr. Mowlam.

The envelope contained the following material:-

1. Northern Ireland Briefing, October 1997
2. Northern Ireland Briefing, July 1997
3. Northern Ireland Briefing, June 1997
4. Speech by Dr. Mowlam, Manchester, 15 June 1997
5. Speech by Dr. Mowlam to the National Committee of American Foreign Policy, 14 November 1997
6. Speech by Secretary of State to Labour Party Conference, 30 September 1997
7. Speech by Secretary of State to G7 Group, 4 August 1997
8. Speech by Secretary of State to the Chief Executive's Forum Conference, Ballymena, 28 May 1997
9. Speech by the Prime Minister at the Royal Agricultural Show, 16 May 1997
10. Towards Genuine Consent in Ulster, 23 February 1997

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The UK Unionist Party has a complete collection of material produced on Northern Ireland by the Labour Party so Dr. Mowlam did not provide me with information of which I was not already aware. But the simple fact of the matter is that there is nothing in these documents which would even remotely entail a repudiation by the government of the unificationist goal and strategy set out in Towards a United Ireland. Obviously, your position and that of the Secretary of State is that these documents do contain material which clearly shows that the Labour government is no longer committed to the goal of Irish unity and to the strategies for achieving that objective set out in Towards a United Ireland.

I would appreciate if you would explain in detail what content there is in these documents which establishes the departure of the government from the unificationist policy and strategy of Towards a United Ireland. If such a departure has taken place, it must be of recent origin since, as late as 2 September 1996, Dr. Mowlam reaffirmed in the Belfast Telegraph what she described as the Labour Party's "policy of historical commitment to Irish unity".

Dr. Mowlam makes frequent references to Northern Ireland which reinforce the image of a society rampant with discrimination and inequality based on religion. For example, in the Secretary of State's speech at the Labour Party Conference on 30 September 1997, she made the following comment:-

"Listening to people from both communities, I hear example after example of where these principles (fairness, equality, and equal justice) have been silent. Not just for the last 30 years, or the last 75, but the last 500 years."

The Secretary of State is not, in this statement, merely claiming that, in Northern Ireland, there is a "perception" of widespread discrimination and inequality, but that extensive and deep-rooted discrimination and inequality is actually a fact of life in Northern





Ireland, sufficiently extensive for the Secretary of State to assure a high level American audience of the urgency for further measures to combat discrimination in employment (see speech to National Committee of American Foreign Policy, New York, 14 November 1997).

This image of Northern Ireland, backed by the Secretary of State, is certainly not conducive to the encouragement and attraction of much needed international investment and this image is, in any case, in the Secretary of State's speech at the Labour Party Conference, based on nothing more than anecdotal comment. The international projection of the image of a community, based on ingrained sectarian discrimination and inequality, is entirely irresponsible, unless there is evidence based on competent research to substantiate these claims. So what discrimination and inequality is the Secretary of State referring to, and what research based evidence is she using to support her claims?

I would appreciate an immediate response.

*James Eager*  
*Bob.*