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FROM: MARTIN HOWARD  
1 APRIL 1998

PS/Secretary of State (L&B) [1+2]

cc: PS/Mr Murphy (L&B) [3+4]  
PS/Mr Ingram (L&B) [5+6]  
PS/PUS (L&B) [7&8]  
Mr Thomas [9]  
Mr Jeffrey [10]  
Mr Steele [11]  
Mr Bell [12]  
Mr Hill [13]  
Mr Brooker [14]  
Mr Ferguson [15]  
Mr Whysall [16]  
Mr Fergusson RID [17]  
Ms Bharucha [18]  
Mr Holmes No 10 [19]

C: B  
✓ AC.

# THE OVERALL SETTLEMENT: LATEST VERSION

In preparation for this evening's meeting between The Prime Minister and the Taoiseach and following discussions and negotiations with Irish officials yesterday and this morning, I attach the latest version of the Overall Agreement.

2. Comments on each of the Chapters are as follows:

- a) Preamble. This is a draft prepared by Irish officials of a preamble to the Overall Agreement to reflect its historic nature. Despite our doubts as to whether such a passage is needed, it is a vast improvement on the original Irish draft which was full of needlessly provocative green rhetoric. We have therefore agreed it at official level with the Irish. **I should be grateful if the Secretary of State could confirm that she too is content.**
- b) Chapter 1: Constitutional Change. As before, this has been agreed by officials and British Ministers, but Irish Ministers have yet formally to endorse it.
- c) Chapter 2: Strand 1. This is the text as sent to John Hume and discussed with him by the Prime Minister at yesterday's meeting. We hope later tonight to send No 10 a revised version to try and pick up at least some of the SDLP's concerns.
- d) Chapter 3: the British-Irish Council. Agreed between officials and British Ministers, but yet to receive Irish Ministerial endorsement. It is possible that the Irish might ask for the reference to a Parliamentary

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element to be removed if we cannot reach agreement on including such an element in the North/South text in Chapter 4.

- e) Chapter 4: North/South The text is as per the draft sent to Paddy Teahon by No 10 and is the subject of separate briefing (see my other minute of today's date).
- f) Chapter 5: the British-Irish Inter-Governmental Conference. The latest British text. We want this body to be able to cover things beyond Northern Ireland. The Irish still want it to be focused exclusively on Northern Ireland. However, Irish officials have hinted that they might be prepared to agree the draft if everything else was resolved satisfactorily. I suspect that if the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach were able to close a deal on Strand 2 this evening, the Irish would concede.
- g) Chapter 6: Rights & Safeguards. Agreed with Irish officials **ad referendum to Ministers on both sides.** You will note that it includes a section on economic, social and cultural issues.
- h) Chapter 7: Confidence Building Measures. Agreed with Irish officials **ad referendum to Ministers on both sides.**

3. Other issues which will need to feature in the final settlement, but on which text has not been fully worked up are validation and review and a section on the victims of violence. The latter does in fact feature appear in the proposed preamble. I will submit separately on the former.

4. Finally, the Irish have asked if they could have a copy of the overall text that is going to the Prime Minister (ie the attached). Given that they have seen all the attached text, with the exception of Chapter 2 on Strand 1 and the Annex to Chapter 4, listing possible areas to be designated for North/South co-operation, there seems no reason not to accede to their request, though again we would not give them Chapter 2 or the Annex to Chapter 4. I have consulted Mr Holmes and he is content subject to these exclusions and provided that it is made clear that it is all ad referendum to the Prime Minister. **Is the Secretary of State content also?**

Signed MLH

**MARTIN HOWARD**

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