



Northern Ireland Office  
Stormont Castle  
Belfast BT4 3ST  
Telephone Belfast (0232) 763255

2 Political meetings

Dr John Alderdice  
88 University Street  
BELFAST  
BT7 1HE

26 August 1993

Dear John,

Since we had a chance to chat informally in the last two months, I have been giving thought over the summer as to how best I can help as the Minister for Political Development in advancing the prospects of an acceptable political settlement following the ending of the round of Talks in November last year.

I know that you, and some others involved in those talks, have doubts about the wisdom of a high profile, formalised and public return at this stage to multilateral Talks of that kind. One reason for this, I sense, is the belief that it would be essential that any future round of Talks of that kind should have a positive outcome and should only be undertaken if the indications are favourable. Against that background it is, I believe, important that we maintain a dialogue on the central political and constitutional issues.

Whether or not it proves possible to achieve an early return to multilateral Talks, though not necessarily in the previous format, I believe it would be useful discreetly and at least bilaterally (though I hope involving all the six previous participants) to continue to explore and assess where all the parties now stand on the political and constitutional issues, what common ground could exist between them as a result of previous dialogue, and what possible scope there is for further accommodation and at what price.

In pursuit of this suggestion I am writing to ask if you or a nominated representative of your Party would agree to meet me to advance initial



discussion on this basis. These discussions would be exploratory, principally as a means of identifying the potential for such a process in the future, the basis on which it might take place and the prospect of it having a successful outcome.

I hope that you feel that such discussions would be useful and that your office could contact my Diary Secretary, David Gray, on 0247-460488 to find a suitable time when I could meet you or your nominated representative.

*Yours sincerely*  
*Michael*

**MICHAEL ANCRAM MP**  
**Minister for Political Development**