



Northern Ireland Office
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Dr John Alderdice
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Dear John

As you know, Michael Ancram and I attach considerable importance to the bilateral discussions which he has been having with the parties over recent months. These have been immensely useful in helping us to develop a relief map of the parties' positions as the talks process moves forward. I know that you share the same view on the value of these meetings.

As the Prime Minister said when he met you at Hillsborough, we are anxious to keep up the momentum and intensify it. I suggest that there should be a further meeting between Michael and your party during the week beginning 10 January. This would be an opportunity to review how these discussions should be taken forward.

If you are content, it would be helpful if your party would make contact with Michael Ancram's office to arrange a date and time.

John Alderdice