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FROM: **N P PERRY PS/SECRETARY OF STATE (L) 18 FEBRUARY 1999**

Desk Immediate

cc see copy distribution

PS/Mr Ingram (L&B)

INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF ABORTION LEGISLATION

I attach copies of an exchange of correspondence between No 10 and ourselves, the upshot of which is that the proposed review of the abortion law in Northern Ireland has now been put on hold. The Secretary of State will, however, wish to return to the issue should the opportunity arise over the next few months. In the meantime she is grateful for the work done so far on the arrangements for the review.

N P PERRY PS/SECRETARY OF STATE (L) Ext 6462

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Distribution List

PS/Secretary of State (L&B) PS/Mr Murphy (L&B) **PS/Mr McFall (DHSS)** PS/PUS (L&B) **PS/Mr Semple** Mr Gowdy Mr Jeffrey Mr Kelly Mr Hill (DHSS) Mr Shannon Mr Maccbae Mr Daniell Mr Whysall Mr White **Mrs Preece** Mr Warner (all inthe allachants)

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From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

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NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE 11 MILLBANK LONDON SW1P 4QE

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John Sawers No.10 Downing Street LONDON

February 1999 18

Den John.

PROPOSED REVIEW OF THE ABORTION LAW IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Thank you for your letter of 17 February.

Dr Mowlam accepts the Prime Minister's view that the proposal should be put on ice for now. She notes, however, that the Labour Party made a commitment preelection to review (not necessarily to change) the abortion law and that the approach she has been considering is a minimalist one. She would like, therefore, to return to the issue should an appropriate opportunity arise when the political process is

further down the road.

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N P PERRY

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10 DOWNING STREET LONDON SWIA 2AA

From the Private Secretary

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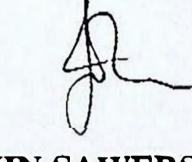
17 February 1999

Dear Nick,

PROPOSED REVIEW OF THE ABORTION LAW IN NORTHERN IRELAND

The Prime Minister has read your Secretary of State's letter of 10 February. He is not convinced that we should embark on a review of the abortion law in Northern Ireland. He sees little scope for bi-communal support for a change to the law and sees little advantage in embarking on a review. I "think he would rather the proposal be put on ice for now.

Your ever



JOHN SAWERS

Nick Perry, Esq., Northern Ireland Office.

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