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Mr
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CLINTON SUPPORTS MAJOR ON IRELAND, DENIES PRESSURE

.PPA (3)

WASHINGTON, Dec 1 (Reuter) - President Clinton expressed support for British Prime Minister John Major in his efforts for peace in Northern Ireland but was not putting pressure on the British leader ahead of his summit with Ireland's Prime Minister, U.S. officials said Wednesday.

A senior official reacted to a report in the Irish Times newspaper that said Clinton had telephoned Major a week ago at Dublin's request and urged him to "go the extra mile for peace."

The official confirmed the conversation took place but rejected any implication that Clinton was exerting pressure on Major.

He said Clinton told Major that "he's supportive of the efforts Major is doing with the Irish government to resolve the situation."

"He (Clinton) indicated that he would be prepared to do whatever he could to assist the process, but he also indicated that he understands this is a situation for the parties over here to take care of and at no point indicated that we would intervene," the official said.

He said the phone call was mostly about world trade and that the situation in Northern Ireland came up at the end.

Major and Irish Prime Minister Albert Reynolds are pushing ahead with plans for a summit Friday seen as crucial to Northern Ireland peace initiatives that both men are working on.

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for B M MacLean

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