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From: JOHN HOLMES

Date: 30 July 1996

PRIME MINISTER ✓

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File  
JH 31/7.

**NORTHERN IRELAND: PHONE CALL WITH THE TAOISEACH**

We spoke. This is now fixed for 0900 tomorrow morning. I will ring first to check you are happy.

I attach a checklist of points to make, NIO briefing, and a couple of public statements. I also attach a copy of a note from Edward about the revised date for the Special European Council, in case this comes up.

As you know, the aim of the conversation is to draw a friendly line under the Drumcree disagreements, rather than have a substantive exchange. But there is bound to be a certain amount of substance following the talks finishing for the summer break last night (the Irish were disappointed but accepted the inevitable); and the at best uncertain prospects for the Apprentice Boys' parade on 10 August (where Sinn Fein now appear to be demanding a solution to the whole parades issue, and are not being helpful over a local accommodation).

I doubt the Taoiseach will raise the Hume/Adams initiative but I have put in a line to take anyway. There is a certain amount of low-key pressure from both the Irish and the Americans to talk directly to Sinn Fein.

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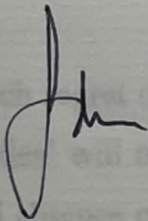
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You may incidentally like to reflect on two ideas for the post-holiday period.

(i) a visit to Northern Ireland: you have not been this year, except to the opening of the talks. A visit sometime in September would demonstrate your continuing commitment and enable you to get a better feel for thinking in the Province.

(ii) a speech on Northern Ireland: you have not set out your views at any length for some time, and there are new circumstances to address. A speech and visit would of course be easily combined - and you could go on to Dublin from Belfast.

You may like to reflect on these ideas over the holiday, depending on how the Apprentice Boys Parade turns out. But any immediate thoughts meanwhile?



**JOHN HOLMES**

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