

CONFIDENTIAL*File*

From: John Holmes
Date: 14 February 1997

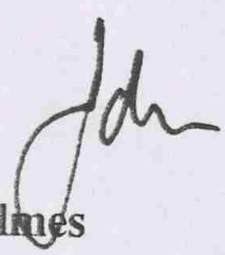
PRIME MINISTER

cc: Mr. Barton
Mr. Haslam

NORTHERN IRELAND

You will see elsewhere in the box a piece reporting Sinn Fein alarm about the reaction to the murder of the soldier in Bessbrook. There is no doubt that the media reaction and coverage here, in the Republic and in the US, should have given Sinn Fein pause.

It seems to me that we should try to press home this advantage in every way possible. In particular, we should stress the theme of the unacceptability and futility of further violence. I have had a go at a draft article which you could put in one of the papers here or in Northern Ireland. It is very much a first draft, not cleared with the NIO, and it needs a good deal more work. But are you content with the idea of such an article, if we can get the content right?


John Holmes

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