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From the Private Secretary

8 July 1997

Dear Man

NORTHERN IRELAND: PRESIDENT CLINTON

The Prime Minister and President Clinton had a long bilateral meeting in the margins of the NATO Summit on 7 July. Northern Ireland was not in fact mentioned, although we told the press afterwards that it had been, with the agreement of the Americans. The Prime Minister did discuss it briefly with Clinton on 8 July, bringing him up to date on Drumcree and prospects for an IRA ceasefire. Clinton promised any help that we might need, and full support. The Prime Minister believes that he means it, not least since we were helpful to the Americans in the NATO Summit itself over the number of countries to be invited for enlargement.

I also took the opportunity to brief both Berger and Steinberg on where we stood. Both seemed in reasonably helpful mode. Steinberg said that he had been in touch with Hume, and expected to be in touch with Sinn Fein, to urge them to keep their eye on the main ball. This was before the fuss about the leaked memo, but I see no reason to believe that US attitudes are likely to change significantly.

I am copying this to William Ehrman (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Jan Polley (Cabinet Office), Sir John Kerr (Washington) and Veronica Sutherland (Dublin).

Yours etc

JOHN HOLMES

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Northern Ireland Office

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