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Office

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✓ COS o/r  
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AP doing briefing.

18 August 1997

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Dear Philip,

Proposed Call on Prime Minister by Irish Political  
Correspondents: December 1997

We have invited 15 senior Irish Political correspondents to London to cover the plenary session of the British Irish Inter-Parliamentary Body which takes place in London from 1-2 December 1997. The BIIPB is a cross-party organisation of MPs and Irish TDs which looks at intergovernmental cooperation and tries to foster closer UK-Irish links. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland will address the session.

In the last two years, the journalists' programme has included a question and answer session at No 10. While we would not seek to institutionalise a call at No 10 as an annual event, there would be particular merit this year in a meeting with the Prime Minister, if his diary permitted. Keen Irish interest in the new British administration would ensure wide media coverage in the Republic. It would be a first class opportunity to underline, through a group of influential opinion formers, our key messages on the forthcoming UK Presidency, as well as on the Peace Process and the Prime Minister's commitment to increasing cooperation between Britain and the Republic.

If the Prime Minister agrees, detailed arrangements will be worked out by our Overseas Visits Section and your Press Office.

I am copying this letter to Ken Lindsay (NIO) and Benjamin Wegg-Prosser (Minister without Portfolio's Office).

Yours ever,  
Fiona

(Fiona Mylchreest)  
Private Secretary

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10 Downing Street