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From the Private Secretary

9 October 1997

Dear Ken,

**TELEPHONE CALL WITH CLINTON: NORTHERN IRELAND**

The Prime Minister spoke to Clinton on the telephone this afternoon primarily to brief him on his visit to Russia earlier in the week. They also discussed Northern Ireland.

The Prime Minister thanked Clinton for seeing Trimble. He had been absolutely thrilled with the meeting. This was very important. The Prime Minister continued that, overall, the talks were in better shape than could have been hoped. He was naturally cautious, but thought there was a real chance to move forward. There was one area that concerned him with which he hoped the Americans could help. This was to reinforce the message to Sinn Fein that if the IRA returned to violence, it would be impossible for the Government to do anything other than throw Sinn Fein out of the talks. It was clear that the IRA were carrying on their preparations, although this might simply be to give those on the ground something to do.

Clinton said that they had sent such a message in the past and would do so again. He had been encouraged by his meeting with Trimble. He was obviously keen to be part of the process and was more upbeat than in the past. The Prime Minister commented that Trimble had given him some difficult moments on decommissioning, but in the end he had delivered. In his assessment, Trimble was interested in a political settlement, unlike Paisley for example. The one cloud was the possibility of IRA mischief. Clinton repeated that they would do what they could on this.

I am copying this letter to Dominick Chilcott (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Jan Polley (Cabinet Office) and Stephen Wright in Washington by fax.

Yours ever,

Philip

PHILIP BARTON

Ken Lindsay Esq  
Northern Ireland Office

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