

SECRET - PERSONAL - VISITS

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

S 159/96

From the Private Secretary

1 November 1996

See her,

OPERATION CHARITON

Thank you for your letter of 13 September. We had a further word about this the other day. I also spoke to Sir John Chilcot in the margins of NI.

It is not easy to do much planning when the circumstances of any visit are so uncertain. But I believe the operation should go ahead before the end of the year if at all possible. We have identified two possible slots:

- Thursday 12 December, before the Dublin European Council the following day;
- Wednesday 18 December.

It would be helpful to have your views on these, and how they fit into the Christmas services point I mentioned to Sir John Chilcot. It would also be helpful to have a preliminary indication of what else might go into a programme at that time of year. Would the kind of visits mentioned in the attachment to your letter of 13 September still be valid? Would a visit to a school carol service be a good idea?

*Yours
John*

JOHN HOLMES

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Northern Ireland Office

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