

**RESTRICTED**10 DOWNING STREET  
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From the Private Secretary

*temporarily retained*

8 July 1997

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OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT**

**NATO SUMMIT: MISCELLANEOUS CONTACTS**

At the dinner given by The King of Spain for participants in the Euro Atlantic Partnership Council on 8 July, the Prime Minister had the chance to meet a variety of East European and other leaders. He sat next to Valery Ferov, Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation, at dinner and had a long discussion with him about the state of reform in Russia. Ferov made a particular pitch for closer relations with Britain, saying that we could play a decisive influence in changing Europe's attitudes to Russia. The Prime Minister was quite taken with him. He apparently has a daughter at university in Canterbury, and plans to visit Britain to see her at the end of July. The Prime Minister hopes that we can take a particular interest in him. He would be willing to write to him to welcome him to Britain and offer him any appropriate help.

Others the Prime Minister met included:

- i. President Havel of the Czech Republic. Havel was delighted to meet the Prime Minister, a feeling which the Prime Minister reciprocated. Havel urged the Prime Minister to try to meet and speak to Zeman, the Social Democrat leader, in order to educate him on electoral success. Havel had great hopes that Zeman would be the Czech version of Tony Blair.
- ii. President Aliiev of Azerbaijan: he complained that relations with Britain had weakened recently, despite our strong interest in the oil industry in Azerbaijan. He hoped that something could be done about this. The Prime Minister agreed warmly, without actually

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- committing himself to a meeting or a visit;
- iii. Prime Minister Drnovsek of Slovenia: warm words were exchanged about the desirability of good relations and a meeting, but nothing more specific than that. I had earlier apologised to his Private Secretary for our failure to follow through on the promised telephone call. She seemed pleased that I was aware of this and had taken the trouble to say something about it;
- iv. President Constantinescu of Romania: more warm but brief words. We tried to arrange a very short bilateral with him before our departure for London early on 9 July but this did not materialise. I would be grateful for a rapid draft letter to him for the Prime Minister, covering this and our post-Madrid views. We may then need to follow up with a telephone call.

**JOHN HOLMES**

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