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THE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE

Washington, D.C. 20230

AUG 14 1998

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN
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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: William M. Daley 

SUBJECT: Your Trip to Northern Ireland and Ireland

As you prepare for your upcoming trip to Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland in early September, I want to give you an account of the business development mission I led to the Northern Ireland and border counties of Ireland in June and a status report on the Department of Commerce's economic initiatives for the region.

The trade mission was very successful. I and some of the top executives held meetings with Ireland and Northern Ireland political leaders including Prime Minister Bertie Ahern, Deputy Prime Minister Mary Harney, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Mo Mowlam, First Minister David Trimble, and Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams. All of them expressed gratitude for the key role you played in the peace process and for the presence of a prominent business delegation on the ground to promote trade and investment in the region.

The sixteen companies involved included eight Fortune 100 corporations and eight CEOs and senior level executives from small and medium size companies. Sectors covered included aerospace, agriculture, environmental, health and information technologies, and food processing. Boeing signed a subcontract with Shorts that will create 200-300 jobs in Dunmurry and two of the small environmental and information technologies companies entered into joint ventures with Northern Ireland firms. The executives on the mission were uniformly enthusiastic about their participation.

During the mission, we also held several dynamic roundtable discussions with business, academic, and community leaders, ranging from executives and young entrepreneurs in Belfast to high technology company leaders in Londonderry. We also made site visits to aerospace and electronics manufacturing sites in Dunmurry and into Derry, Northern Ireland and to health care manufacturing in Sligo, Ireland. My impression is that there is a strong sense of entrepreneurship, which, combined with the strong work ethic and the educational foundation and technology training, will position Northern Ireland to compete successfully in the 21st century.

Commerce is undertaking a number of follow-up activities:

1. My staff is working closely with the Industrial Development Board of Northern Ireland (IDB) to support an 11-city U.S. tour, October 8-30, 1998, which will be led by Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Mowlam. She will visit Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Denver, Minneapolis/St. Paul, New York, Philadelphia, San Jose and Seattle. We are assisting in announcing the tour to business executives in each city who may be interested in discussing trade and investment issues with the delegation, and I will personally participate in a portion of the visit.
2. There will be a series of other trade missions to Northern Ireland led by other officials of the Commerce Department, starting with a mission focusing on software and information technologies in early 1999.
3. We are expanding our commercial staff in Northern Ireland to provide support for the increased influx of U.S. companies to the region.
4. We are exploring the establishment of a "Blue Ribbon Committee" of U.S. CEOs who could serve as an advisory group with respect to Northern Ireland's strategy for economic development. The IDB has undertaken an effort to examine Northern Ireland's economic resources and opportunities and develop a strategy for Northern Ireland's future economic development. Such a "Blue Ribbon Committee" could provide an outside perspective on that strategy and on other trade and investment activities.
5. Our National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has agreed to initiate a five year/\$5 million collaboration that would focus on coastal and oceanographic science and resource management as part of our existing "Joint Statement of Understanding for Research and Technology Development" with the Marine Institute of Ireland. The \$5 million would be equally shared between the Marine Institute and NOAA, spread over five years and, for NOAA will be "in-kind" services (i.e. existing satellite data, data buoys, ship surveys, staff time). NOAA has also had a number of discussions with several Northern Ireland agencies, led by the Department of Agriculture's (DANI) Fisheries Secretariat, aimed at developing a similar "Joint Statement" between NOAA and DANI to pursue collaborative activities. The goal of both efforts is to promote tri-lateral ocean exploration and resource management between NOAA, the Marine Institute and DANI.

I would be pleased to discuss this further with you at your convenience.