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PRIME MINISTER

CLIMATE CHANGE: THE RUN-UP TO THE HOUSTON SUMMIT

I have seen Chris Patten's minute to you of 20 June, covering the draft of a note which might be put to the Summit by the UK.

I agree with the general thrust of the draft. In the preparatory discussions for the Summit, there has been little movement on the part of the United States from their position that until the science provides a firmer justification for action on greenhouse gas emissions, particularly carbon dioxide, it would be premature to take action. It seems to me there is a strong case for attempting to bring the Americans and Japan and our main EC partners closer together on these issues at the Summit, because that will help achieve a successful November Conference in Geneva on the world climate. I agree that recognition that different circumstances justify different targets for different countries, and a broadening of the debate to cover strategies for control of greenhouse gases as well as targets, is the most promising way forward.

My only reservation on the draft note by the UK attached to Chris Patten's minute was the possible conclusion in 3(iii), namely that the Summit should call for all countries to develop targets and strategies in time for the World Climate Conference in November. This implies that countries should have firm strategies in place by then, whereas it seems more likely that, like the UK, most countries will want some assurance that others will adopt

comparable measures before they commit themselves to take action going beyond what is worth doing in any case. Your announcement of the target the UK would be prepared to adopt was in these conditional terms. Rather, the Summit might agree that the Conference provided the opportunity for all countries to consider targets and strategies and to discuss an effective international response. That would sit more easily with the following conclusion (iv), which would decouple the proposed framework convention from the protocols to it.

I am copying this to members of MISC 141.

[J.M]

ECAN Pol: Houston Economic Summit

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