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 (for distribution: D/T)
 ✓ Mr. Dalton
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DATE: 1 December 1995

PAGES: 2

FOR: HQ
 FOR: Second Secretary

FROM: BELFAST
 FROM: Joint Secretary

Subj: Approach to Senator Mitchell

To confirm:

1. Michael Legge (NIO) and I had a meeting at the QUB reception last night with Senator Mitchell and his assistant Martha Pope.
2. We mentioned the names of the two candidates whom the Governments had in mind as his colleagues on the Body. The Senator made clear that he had no objections to either name and was very happy at the appointments. He has met De Chastelain before but is not acquainted with Holkeri.
3. We told him also of the two Governments' plans to issue simultaneous press releases announcing the appointments.
4. His immediate priority is to make contact with both individuals. I have been liaising with David Cooney on this. Michael Legge has provided the phone numbers in the British Government's possession and I have passed these to David for correlation with the numbers we may have and forwarding to Martha Pope at the Conrad Hotel this morning (as she requested last night).
5. Senator Mitchell also indicated the time-slots which he envisages for his return visits to Ireland in connection with this assignment. These are 15-18 December and (roughly) 10-13 January. He has in mind an intensive programme of contacts on both occasions. He has unfortunately a prior overseas commitment which will take him out of the US for a number of days from 13 January onwards. Conscious of the mid-January deadline specified in Tuesday's communique, he hopes that there may be some flexibility in this regard and would be willing to return to Ireland around 18 January if still required. His aim, however, is to have the report finalised by on or around 10 January.
6. In the first instance, he would like to invite the political parties to send in written submissions. He proposes to issue a letter to this effect to them early next week (after he has consulted with his two colleagues). The submissions would be processed by

the Body and would form the basis for oral exchanges when the Senator returns in mid-December. As I mentioned, he and Martha Pope requested the Governments' assistance in phoning the parties for the purpose of alerting them to the forthcoming letter. In contacts I have had this morning with Michael Legge and David Cooney, we have agreed that the appropriate course would be for the Governments simply to supply contact details to Martha Pope and to leave it to the Body and its staff to make the actual contacts.

7. There was no detailed discussion last night of practical aspects of the Body's work. The Senator and Martha Pope were grateful for the practical arrangements paper which we handed over and will no doubt have points to raise arising from it when you see them on Saturday. What did emerge, however, is that Martha will be the Senator's main collaborator on this assignment and that both the Senator's and her own services will come free of charge (as will those of a further staffer and a secretary, if I understood correctly). It was also clear that they had not expected hotel accommodation arrangements to be made for them on quite the scale which has been envisaged.
8. Finally, a point which may be of not entirely academic interest. Legge mentioned to Mitchell that Paul Lever of the Cabinet Office, whom you know, is a fluent Finnish speaker (from his FCO training) and could be useful in case any language difficulties arise with Holkeri. It is difficult to imagine any such difficulties arising with an individual of Holkeri's background but it may be an angle worth watching. (Legge referred lightly to Lever's skills as the British Government's "secret weapon").