



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

Reference Code: 2021/97/45

Creator(s): Department of the Taoiseach

Accession Conditions: Open

Copyright: National Archives, Ireland. May only be reproduced with the written permission of the Director of the National Archives.

Ambasáid na hÉircann
Embassy of Ireland



Irlannin Suurlähetystö
Irlands Ambasad

Secure Fax

12 December 1995

For: Colm O'Floinn

From: O'Ceallaigh

Subject: Independent Body

At his request Mr. Holkeri briefed me today on his visit to the US. He had briefed the British Ambassador separately at a meeting which I could not attend because of a meeting between PM Lipponen and the Oireachtas European Affairs Committee.

In the discussion which followed Mr. Holkeri's formal briefing I drew on the background in Mr. Ó hUigin's note on his conversation with Senator Mitchell in response to which Mr. Holkeri said

- 1) They are looking for a situation in which arms will not be used for political purposes.
- 2) No side should be put in a situation where it loses face or surrenders.
- 3) Human Rights are an important element.

In his formal briefing he said he had good discussions on disarmament with the UN secretariat officials in New York. Even though Northern Ireland is quite different some disarmament cases gave him an idea of what can be done and more importantly what cannot be done. There is plenty of room for imagination, he felt.

In speaking of his meeting with Senator Mitchell and Mr. de Chastelain he said from the first it was obvious the three

shared a similar sense of humour. He had earlier mentioned that he has been given an almost impossible mission. His visit to New York convinced him it is not totally impossible and made him more comfortable with his task.

Mitchell struck him as very able, well informed and easy to deal with. He was impressed with Mitchell's knowledge of who wrote what parts of the communique and of his grasp of the different opinions of the groups and organisations in Northern Ireland. He also has a good staff. Holkeri now feels easier in himself and less confused.

De Chastelain is solid, has relevant experience, a good background for this work and has done his homework. Holkeri said he had pointed out some things that were new to him.

Holkeri said that some expect miracles in this political issue. Finland may be known as the land of Santa Claus but he is not a political Father Christmas. However a certain space appears to be available for imagination, a certain momentum has been built up and they will use whatever human capacities they have. He expects a lot of written submissions but he attaches more importance to the oral hearings at least at this stage.

They have decided to try and produce their report by the mid-January deadline. This has a value in itself in keeping up the momentum and if they can produce new elements which could be helpful to the two Governments it would be a good signal.

He said he is looking forward to the official briefing in Dublin on Thursday, which he expects will be of a factual nature and said he intends to speak again to both the British Ambassador and myself most probably between Christmas and the New Year.

11.00
H
—