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Last month, while Prime Minister Holkeri was chairing a Plenary meeting, he was asked to interpret a provision in The International Body's Report of 22 January 1996. The Prime Minister declined, stating that "The Report speaks for itself". Since then several participants have offered their interpretations of various provisions of the Report.

We, the Independent Chairmen, are in an unusual position, since we previously served as member of The International Body whose Report is now the subject of debate in these talks.

We have considered the matter and have concluded that Prime Minister Holkeri's response was correct. The Report represented our best judgement on the evidence that was then available to us. It would not be useful for us now to try to interpret or re-interpret it.

To do so with respect to one provision, at the request of one participant, could lead to an endless series of requests for interpretation of other provisions by other participants. Such a course of action would in no way contribute to progress in these



talks, and might have the opposite effect. Accordingly, we respectfully reaffirm Prime Minister Holkeri's response. The Report speaks for itself.