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## STATEMENT BY SENATOR GEORGE J. MITCHELL

SEPTEMBER 9, 1996

I am pleased that the talks resumed today. I join my colleagues, General de Chastelain and Prime Minister Holkeri, in encouraging the participants to make rapid substantive progress on the important issues with which they are dealing.

I noted the continued speculation in the press that I will shortly leave the talks. Such speculation is unfounded and untrue.

When I accepted the invitation of the Governments to participate in these talks, I accepted enthusiastically because I believed the talks represent an historic opportunity for the people of Northern Ireland. That is still my view.

I told the Governments then that from time to time I would have to be absent to meet other commitments. That has been and will continue to be the case. So while there will continue to be occasional days when my presence elsewhere will be necessary, I remain deeply and totally committed to this process and will continue to do all I can to be of assistance.

End