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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

16 JULY 1996

STATEMENT BY SENATOR GEORGE J. MITCHELL, GENERAL JOHN de CHASTELAIN AND PRIME MINISTER HARRI HOLKERI

We express our regret over the circumstances of the past week which have seen such violence, destruction and fear return to Northern Ireland. In particular, we voice our concern and condolences to those who have suffered loss as a result of these events.

We restate our strong and unequivocal condemnation of the use or the threat of violence to achieve political objectives.

We recognize the extreme difficulties of the talks now underway, especially in the current climate. But we are convinced that progress is possible. In any event, the talks represent the only acceptable alternative. An end to the talks could condemn the people of Northern Ireland to a renewal of widespread sectarian violence.

We have consulted with the participants. There was a clear consensus among them to continue with the talks and to do so with a sense of urgency and increased determination. We will do all we can to further that objective. We remain convinced that the solution to the problems so evident during the past week lies in dialogue and in the resolution of differences around the negotiating table.

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