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cc JPO
PPolr
AC
PMcFadden

From the Private Secretary

5 September 1997

Dear Richard,

**INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON DECOMMISSIONING:
MEMBERSHIP**

Thank you for your letter of 5 September. As you say, all three candidates seem impressive. I understand that the approval of the Taoiseach has now been given. We too are content that you should go ahead with those steps to involve the members which are possible while the question of Chairmanship remains unresolved. In other words, you can now consult the talks participants on the identity of the Commissioners and arrange for at least Nieminen and Johnson to visit and be briefed next week. There is of course a problem over the Canadian nomination, Dangerfield, until the question of the Chairmanship is resolved.

I might make one other point. It seems to me possible that, if de Chastelain is not to be Chairman, there may be some reluctance on the part of the Unionists to accept the Finn as Chairman instead. We need to be sensitive about this, and try to bring the Unionists along, rather than appearing simply to impose our wishes. This of course applies across the board.

I am copying this letter to John Grant (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Jan Polley (Cabinet Office), and by fax to Veronica Sutherland in Dublin.

Yours

JOHN HOLMES

Richard Lemon Esq
Northern Ireland Office

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