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Presidential Remarks: Meeting with
Senator George Mitchell,
Dec 1 94

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON
REMARKS AT MEETING WITH SENATOR
GEORGE MITCHELL
DECEMBER 1, 1994
THE WHITE HOUSE**

Today is the last day of this session of Congress and therefore the last day that we have the privilege of having Senator Mitchell as Majority Leader of the Senate. I personally will miss his help in Congress and his wise counsel.

And I know that colleagues on both sides of the aisle and the American people will miss the leadership, thoughtfulness and courage that have distinguished him as one of the great political figures of our time.

My regret at Senator Mitchell's retirement is tempered - - at least in part -- by the fact that as one chapter in his life of extraordinary public service ends another is beginning: Today, Senator Mitchell has agreed to work on an issue of central importance as Special Advisor to me and Secretary Christopher for Economic Initiatives in Ireland.

We stand at the verge of a new and peaceful era in Northern Ireland. For over three months, the historic ceasefires of the IRA and the loyalist paramilitary groups have held. I welcome today's invitation by Downing Street to Sinn Fein to begin an exploratory dialogue on December 7.

A just and lasting settlement that respects the rights and traditions of the two communities in Northern Ireland is, after so many generations of bloodshed, within reach.

But at this hopeful, historic moment, it is essential to create more economic opportunity in a region whose prospects have long been blighted by bloodshed.

Peace and prosperity depend on one another. One of the most important ways we can help to ensure that peace takes root is to help promote trade and investment in the areas in Ireland that have suffered most from the violence.

That's why last month we announced our economic initiatives for Ireland. They are a response to the call of all the parties in the region for development that will help them lift themselves out of the cycle of conflict. As we have in the past, the U.S. stands ready to help those who are taking the risks for peace.

To do that, we will work in close cooperation with the private sector in the U.S., and with Britain, Ireland and with other concerned nations in Europe and other elsewhere.

Ultimately, the success of the peace process will depend on whether those who have been most affected believe it will deliver a better future for them. That is why our initiatives to help revitalize the economy of the region are so important. And that is why I wanted someone with tremendous talent, stature and wisdom to assist in these efforts.

No one, of course, fills that bill like Senator Mitchell. Senator Mitchell will oversee the White House Conference on Trade and Investment in Ireland, which will be held this coming April in Philadelphia.

I have asked him to ensure implementation of all the initiatives we announced last month and to explore additional opportunities for helping peace and prosperity grow in Ireland. He will consult with the International Fund for Ireland, Congress and others to strengthen the Fund's programs.

He will also begin a dialogue with the European Union, its individual member states and other nations to promote economic development in the areas which have also been affected by years of violence.

I am confident that in the weeks and months ahead, the people of Ireland will come to respect and admire Senator Mitchell as much as we all have. George, I'm delighted to be saying welcome to you today and not farewell.

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