

FOIA MARKER

This is not a textual record. This is used as an administrative marker by the William J. Clinton Presidential Library Staff.

Collection/Record Group: Clinton Presidential Records
Subgroup/Office of Origin: Records Management - SUBJECT FILE
Series/Staff Member:
Subseries:

OA/ID Number: 21689
Scan ID: 144815
Document Number:

Folder Title:
CO081

Stack:	Row:	Section:	Shelf:	Position:
S	83	5	6	3

ME

144815
CO 081

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

December 13, 1995

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

It was a great pleasure to come to Ireland and meet with you. The warm welcome we received from everyone was very moving.

I again commend the efforts of your government and the government of Prime Minister Major to bring peace to Northern Ireland. The twin-track framework is a promising step on the road toward a lasting settlement, and the United States will continue to support you as you strive for peace.

Thank you for the sculpture, book, scroll, and flag. They are beautiful symbols of the friendship and good will between our nations, and I am delighted to have them. Mrs. Clinton joins me in sending best wishes.

Sincerely,



His Excellency
John G. Bruton
Prime Minister of Ireland
Dublin

December 13, 1995

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

It was a great pleasure to come to Ireland and meet with you. The warm welcome we received from everyone was very moving.

I again commend the efforts of your government and the government of Prime Minister Major to bring peace to Northern Ireland. The twin-track framework is a promising step on the road toward a lasting settlement, and the United States will continue to support you as you strive for peace.

Thank you for the sculpture, book, scroll, and flag. They are beautiful symbols of the friendship and good will between our nations, and I am delighted to have them. Mrs. Clinton joins me in sending best wishes.

Sincerely,

BILL CLINTON

His Excellency
John G. Bruton
Prime Minister of Ireland
Dublin

BC/NAM/JRS/TDS/efr-lynn-efr
(Corres. #2592429)
(12.bruton.jg)
cc: White House Gifts

Xeroxed copy of personally signed original to NH
through Todd Stern

~~CLEAR WITH NSC
CLEAR THRU TODD STERN
DISPATCH THRU STATE
PRESIDENT TO SIGN~~

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

December 11, 1995

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

It was a great pleasure to come to Ireland and meet with you. The warm welcome we received from everyone was very moving.

✓ I again commend the efforts of your government and the government of Prime Minister Major to bring ~~lasting~~ peace to Northern Ireland. The twin-track framework is a promising step on the road toward a lasting settlement, and the United States will continue to support you as you strive for peace.

Thank you for the sculpture, book, scroll, and flag. They are beautiful symbols of the friendship and good will between our nations, and I am delighted to have them. Mrs. Clinton joins me in sending best wishes.

Sincerely,

His Excellency
John G. Bruton
Prime Minister of Ireland
Dublin

Lemonaghan Ferbane Co. Offaly Ireland Telephone 0902 54559

TITLE:

RISING TROUT

WOOD:

IRISH Bog OAK

BOG FOUND:

KENAGH Co. Longford

AGE IN BOG:

5600 years

FINISH:

BEESWAX

the CELTIC ROOTS studio

John Bruton, J.D.

Taoiseach

EC

John Bruton
Taoiseach

December 11, 1995

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

It was a great pleasure to come to Ireland and meet with you. The warm welcome we received from everyone was very moving.

I again commend the efforts of your government and the government of Prime Minister Major to bring lasting peace to Northern Ireland. The twin-track framework is a promising step on the road toward a lasting settlement, and the United States will continue to support you as you strive for peace.

Thank you for the sculpture, book, scroll, and flag. They are beautiful symbols of the friendship and good will between our nations, and I am delighted to have them. Mrs. Clinton joins me in sending best wishes.

Sincerely,

His Excellency
John G. Bruton
Prime Minister of Ireland
Dublin

BC/NAM/JRS/efr-lynn (Corres. #2592429)
(12.bruton.jg)
cc: White House Gifts

Xeroxed copy of personally signed original to NH
through Todd Stern

CLEAR WITH NSC
CLEAR THRU TODD STERN
DISPATCH THRU STATE
PRESIDENT TO SIGN

TF

(optional, either is correct)

December 8, 1995

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

It was a great pleasure to come to Ireland and meet with you. *from everyone*
~~I was moved by The stirring~~ *warm*
welcome we received *was very moving. Moving.*

I again commend the efforts of your government and the government of Prime Minister Major to bring lasting peace to Northern Ireland. The twin-track framework is a promising step on the road toward a lasting settlement, and the United States will continue to support you as you strive for peace.

Thank you for the sculpture, book, scroll, and flag. They are beautiful symbols of the friendship and good will between our nations, and I am delighted to have them. Mrs. Clinton joins me in sending best wishes.

Sincerely,

His Excellency
John G. Bruton
Prime Minister of Ireland
Dublin



BC/NAM/JRS/efr (Corres. #2592429)
(12.bruton.jg)
cc: White House Gifts

Xeroxed copy of personally signed original to NH
through Todd Stern

CLEAR WITH NSC
CLEAR THRU TODD STERN
DISPATCH THRU STATE
PRESIDENT TO SIGN

GIFT UNIT-DRAFT OF BC LETTER

INITIALS: BC / nam / *ms*

DOCUMENT TITLE: /gifts/draft/bruton.john.nam

DRAFT DATE / LETTER DATE: Dec 06 1995 /

CORRESPONDENCE #: 2592429

CLEAR WITH: *NSC*

WHCC:

CC: WH Gifts

CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESSED TO:
His Excellency *G.* John Bruton
Prime Minister of Ireland
Dublin, ~~Foreign Country~~

ENCLOSURES AND SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:
Dispatch thru State Dept.
BC.SIG

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

It was *a great* my pleasure to come to Ireland and meet with you. I was moved by the stirring welcome we received.

I again commend the efforts of your government and the government of Prime Minister Major to bring *lasting peace* ~~stability~~ to Northern Ireland. The twin-track framework is a promising step on the road toward a lasting ~~political~~ settlement, and the United States *will continue to* supports you as you strive for ~~peace~~. *that goal*

Thank you for the *g* wonderful sculpture, book, scroll, and flag. They are beautiful symbols of the friendship and goodwill between our nations, and I am delighted to have them. Mrs. Clinton joins me in sending best wishes.

Sincerely,

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

December 11, 1995

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

It was a great pleasure to come to Ireland and meet with you. The warm welcome we received from everyone was very moving.

I again commend the efforts of your government and the government of Prime Minister Major to bring ~~lasting~~ peace to Northern Ireland. The twin-track framework is a promising step on the road toward a lasting settlement, and the United States will continue to support you as you strive for peace.

Thank you for the sculpture, book, scroll, and flag. They are beautiful symbols of the friendship and good will between our nations, and I am delighted to have them. Mrs. Clinton joins me in sending best wishes.

Sincerely,

His Excellency
John G. Bruton
Prime Minister of Ireland
Dublin

~~Tom~~ Peters

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

DATE: 12/6/95

TO: JOHN FICKLIN'
RECORDS MANAGEMENT
NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

FROM: WHITE HOUSE GIFTS

ATTN: Chris George or Tom Sculimbrene

Please review the attached Presidential letter and indicate your recommendation by initialling below.

Concur as is: _____

Concur with changes: mat

Alternate response: _____

Return form and attachment to White House Gifts, Room 457 OEOB as soon as possible.

8659D6

BRUNTON

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

GIFT UNIT CORRESPONDENCE TRACKING SHEET

Date gift presented	<u>12/1/95</u>
Date gift received in Gift Unit	<u>12/5/95</u>
Date contact made with State Dept regarding salutation and address	<u>per S.D. memo</u>
Date information received from State Department	<u>—</u>
Date gift draft written	<u>12/5/95</u>
Date of internal editing	<u>12/6/95 DWS</u>
Date sent to NSC for clearance	<u>12/6/95 DWS</u>
Date returned from NSC	<u>12/8/95</u>
Date sent to editing/ Presidential support/FLO office	<u>—</u>
Editing Date	<u>12/8/95</u>
Typing Date	<u>—</u>
Final Approval	<u>—</u>

December 4, 1995

Dear Madam President:

It was an honor for me to come to Dublin and a pleasure to meet with you. I am grateful for the very warm welcome we received upon our arrival.

I applaud the work of your government and the government of Prime Minister Major toward peace in Northern Ireland. The twin-track process to which Prime Minister Bruton and Prime Minister Major have agreed is an encouraging development in your efforts to achieve a lasting political settlement, and I assure you that the United States supports your search for peace.

Thank you for the beautiful ceramic piece and table linens. Mrs. Clinton and I appreciate your kindness and generosity and send our best wishes to you and Mr. Robinson.

Sincerely,

Her Excellency
Mary B. Robinson
President of Ireland
Dublin

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
ORM OPTICAL DISK NETWORK

ID# 144815

___ Hardcopy pages are in poor condition (too light or too dark).

Remainder of case not scanned.

___ Oversize attachment not scanned.

___ Report not scanned.

___ Enclosure(s) not scanned.

___ Proclamation not scanned.

___ Incoming letter(s) not scanned.

___ Proposal not scanned.

___ Statement not scanned.

___ Duplicate letters attached - not scanned.

___ Only table of contents scanned.

___ No incoming letter attached.

___ Only tracking sheet scanned.

___ Photo(s) not scanned.

___ Bill not scanned.

___ Resolution not scanned.

Comments:

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Dublin, Ireland)

For Immediate Release

December 1, 1995

PRESS CONFERENCE BY THE PRESIDENT
AND PRIME MINISTER BRUTON OF IRELAND

Steps of Government Buildings
Dublin, Ireland

1:20 P.M. (L)

PRIME MINISTER BRUTON: Ladies and gentlemen, Mr.

President: I'd like to welcome you warmly to Ireland to thank you for all that you have done to help bring peace to our country, to thank you for all that you are continuing to do to bring the people that live on this island closer together and improve the relations that exist between this island and its neighbors.

I'm delighted that it was possible for the British Prime Minister, John Major to whom I pay tribute here, and myself to agree on a framework for moving forward towards a settlement of the differences that have existed on this island for 300 years now, and the fact that we were able to do that on the eve of your visit is no accident. Because we both realized, both John Major and I, that the sort of support that you have been able to give, yesterday and today, to the people of this island, searching for peace, searching for reconciliation, searching to heal the wounds that have been there for so long, and looking positively to the future, we both appreciate it that your support gives them encouragement, gives us encouragement and is something for which we, from the bottom of our hearts sincerely, thank you. Mr. President

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. I'd like to begin by thanking the Prime Minister for his warm welcome and more importantly, I want to say a special word of thanks to all of the people of Ireland and the people of Northern Ireland who have shown such extraordinary warmth and generosity to Hillary and me and now our American delegation.

This has been an extraordinary experience for us, and I will never forget it. I thank the Prime Minister for what he said, but the truth is that the credit for this latest progress belongs to the Taoiseach and to Prime Minister Major. They announced this twin-track initiative to advance the peace process of Northern Ireland shortly before I arrived here. It gives the parties a chance to engage in an honest dialogue where all their views are represented and everybody's voice can be heard. And I certainly hope that it will be successful.

Let me also say, as you know, it establishes a means to address the issue of decommissioning, and I am gratified that my good friend, Senator George Mitchell is going to leave the international body to deal with that issue. He is seizing this opportunity already. He has begun to organize the effort with other members, and I expect him to be at work shortly.

Let me again say, I know that I speak for all Americans who want peace and ultimate reconciliation on this island when I say that the Taoiseach has shown great courage in the pursuit of peace and we intend to do whatever we can to help him, Prime Minister Major, Mr. Spring and all others who are working for peace to succeed.

7

The United States is honored to stand with those who take risks for peace, and we are doing it all across the world -- in the Middle East, in Bosnia and here. It is a difficult road to travel. It is always easier to stay in the known way and to play on the known fears. But the right thing to do is to do what is being done here, and I applaud it and I want to do everything I can to support it.

Let me also say that we had the opportunity to discuss the situation in Bosnia, and I described as best I could the terms of the peace agreement and what we intend to do in the United States with our allies to implement it in a military way, and what nonmilitary tasks have to be undertaken.

I am very hopeful that after the peace agreement is signed in Paris in just a couple of weeks, we will see a dramatic change in that war-torn land. Let me say that the kind of thing that the international community is going to have to do in Bosnia is consistent with what Ireland has done every day for nearly 40 years now.

Irish peacekeepers have helped people to live in peace from Cyprus to Somalia, to feed the hungry, to do so much that most people in the world don't even know the people of Ireland have done. And again, I want to say on behalf of the American people, I am very, very grateful for that.

So we had a good meeting, we've got a wonderful relationship, the sun is shining, and I hope it's a good omen for peace in Northern Ireland. Thank you. (Applause.)

Q The impasse has been broken at the moment, but the roadblock is still there. Senator Mitchell's committee is going to start its work. If at the end of the day the deadlock is still there, is your government, your administration prepared to act as persuaders to get to all party talks without preconditions?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, first of all, let me say I think we ought to give these folks a chance to succeed. We shouldn't be talking about if, at the end of the day, the Prime Minister of Great Britain and the Taoiseach have announced, I think, a brilliant formulation which permits people to go forward in dealing with all of these issues without giving up any of the things they say they believe in and have to have.

I think we ought to give this process a chance to succeed. If it fails, then we'll reconnoiter and see what to do next. But I think the lesson of the last 15 months is that the people like peace, they like the absence of violence, and they want to go forward, not backward. They want to deal with the issues that are still before them. So, I'm inclined to believe it will succeed. If it doesn't, then you can ask me that question.

Q What has your visit done, in concrete terms, to change the way the United States will engage with the process? How has it affected where you go from here?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know that the visit has done anything to change, in concrete terms, the way we are engaged except, I believe, that since we have a quite a large number of members of Congress here, and quite a large number of business people here, and quite a large contingent of people in the news media here, all seeing what is going on in Northern Ireland, I think it will deepen the support of the American people for our constructive involvement, and it might well intensify the number of -- the pace at which people in the private sector are willing to make investments and try to bring the economic benefits of peace to the people there. But we are committed, we have been committed and we're going to stay committed. And we'll be there until the work is finished.

Q Mr. President, back home Republicans in Congress are expressing concern about snipers and bombs and ethnic hatreds that American forces are going to face in Bosnia. When you go to Germany tomorrow, what will you tell the American troops about the dangers they face and have you heard any estimates about the casualties that they might suffer?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, first of all, the American troops that have trained to go to Bosnia know every bit as much about the dangers they might face as I do. What I will tell them is that it is not a risk-free mission. Indeed, being in the military is not risk-free. We lose a significant number of our finest young people every year just in the training exercises because of the inherent danger of moving around and doing the things that they do in the air, on the land and at sea.

I will tell them that we have done everything we can to minimize the risks; we have guaranteed for them very robust rules of engagement so that if anyone attempts to interfere with their mission, or to take action against them, they can respond with decisive, indeed with overwhelming force and that their peace and their security, their safety, is uppermost in my mind and in the mind of their general officers who have done all the planning for this mission, but that this is a mission very much in America's interest where we can make a huge difference and stop the worst slaughter in Europe since World War II and that I'm very proud of them for doing it.

Q Mr. President, are you escalating the U.S. involvement in Bosnia even before we go there? Suddenly, 20,000 troops have become 25,000 and the cost has gone from \$1.5 billion to \$3 billion.

THE PRESIDENT: No, well, first of all, I don't think it's going to be at \$3 billion but we -- the numbers keep getting bandied around here. Some people who count the money in Europe would be double counting it. Some of this money is going to be spent anyway. I don't think we should count as a cost of the operation in Bosnia, for example, the salary of someone who's going to get paid their salary whether they're there or not.

The 25,000, let me say -- well, I have always said we would have 20,000 people in the theatre. We have been asked how many people are necessary to support them. And we will have -- we'll have another roughly 5,000 people outside of Bosnia in support of those who are in Bosnia. But they will not be in the Bosnian theatre. There may be some extra costs associated with them that are sizeable enough, and they ought to be included in the bill that we tell Congress we expect to pay here.

But if you look at it, again I will say, this is an appropriate level of contribution. This is no more than a third -- may wind up being considerably less than a third of the total contribution depending on how many other nations participate. You heard the British Prime Minister say two days ago that he expected that Great Britain, a country with a population of roughly -- well, less than a fourth of ours, is going to send 13,000 troops to the theater. So the Europeans are going to take

the major load, and we should support them.

Q It seems that this historic trip by President Clinton to Ireland has facilitated an agreement between yourself and John Major. Is that not ominous for the future of the peace process if it takes President Clinton's arrival to produce that level of movement forward? When we get to the really serious negotiations, won't it be more difficult?

PRIME MINISTER BRUTON: I think the ingredients for the agreement have been there for quite some time. But I think it is the case that we both recognize that the President's visit to Britain and Ireland was an opportunity for both of us to launch in the best possible circumstances an initiative which we

were probably going to have to agree anyway very shortly. But we were able to do it on the eve of President Clinton's visit in such a fashion as to ensure that his presence here has given it the fairest possible wind.

Q Mr. Prime Minister, why is it necessary for the United States for the third time in this century to send troops to Europe? Why aren't the Europeans capable, in your opinion, of resolving these kinds of problems in Bosnia by themselves?

PRIME MINISTER BRUTON: I think it's important to recognize that if you have genocide of the kind that was occurring in Bosnia, that's not just a European problem, that's a problem for the world at large. It's a problem for the common civilization which we all share. It's a common problem for all of us who have democratic values -- democratic values which stem in Europe chiefly from the inspiration of the American War of Independence and the United States Declaration of Independence. Those values are universal and, therefore, there is a universal responsibility, in my view, for all of us to do whatever we can in proportion to our means to facilitate the making of peace.

It is very important also to stress that the role that the United States, the European Union, and others have played in Bosnia is one of facilitating peacemaking. The peace is not being made by the United States, no more than it is being made by the European Union. The peace in Bosnia is being made by the people of Bosnia themselves. And that is the same situation in this country. We provide a framework; they must do the deal.

THE PRESIDENT: And I just want to mention one other thing, too. I want you to think about these points: Number one, at the end of World War II, we established NATO, recognizing that we would try to stay together dealing with common security concerns. Admittedly, at the time, we thought those concerns might play themselves out in Central Europe in the contest between what was then the Soviet Union and the Western bloc, the NATO bloc. But we understood that we had shared concerns that would manifest themselves first on the continent of Europe, but could become much more immediate for us.

Now, the NATO powers have voted among themselves to work with others through the United Nations and on our own in brokering this peace agreement and trying to implement it. This is consistent with what we have done since World War II.

The second thing I'd like to ask every American is how you would have felt -- I would like to ask every American how would you have felt when President Bush sent out the call for help in Desert Storm, which was a war, not a peacekeeping measure, if they said: You handle that; you have more money, more soldiers, more interest there; you're concerned about the oil; you waste more oil than the rest of us do; you guys handle that?

Or think about all the countries that helped us in Haiti who didn't say: I'm sorry, that's not our problem; that's your problem; you have the refugees in the United States; we don't have them; they're on your shore; they're your problem; we

can't be bothered with that.

But instead, we have had dozens of countries rally to the United States to work with us in common cause when their values were violated by things that were of more immediate concern to us. That's what they did in Desert Storm. That's what they did in Haiti.

And I will say, every day -- every day -- for almost 40 years, there has been a citizen of Ireland in some distant country working for peacekeeping in places where the United States did not go. And they did not ask, what is the immediate interest of the people of Ireland in doing that.

So I think the United States has been very well-served by countries that have been willing to stand up with us, to stand up for good things and right things that also affect our interest. And I believe we should do this now.

PRIME MINISTER BRUTON: Thank you. We must respect the timetable. I'm sorry. Thank you very much, indeed. Thank you. (Applause.)

END

1:41 P.M. (L)

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Dublin, Ireland)

For Immediate Release

December 1, 1995

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
WITH PRIME MINISTER BRUTON
IN PHOTO OPPORTUNITY

Government Buildings
Dublin, Ireland

12:29 P.M. (L)

Q Welcome to Ireland.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I'm delighted to be here.

Q Did you enjoy your trips to Belfast and Derry yesterday?

THE PRESIDENT: Very, very much.

Q How significant do you think it's going to be for the peace process, your visit to Belfast yesterday? Both of you, would you answer briefly?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I hope it will be very significant, but I think, frankly, it will have more meaning because of what the Taoiseach and Prime Minister Major did in launching the twin-track proposal. They gave me something to talk about, to try to advance the peace process, as well as to hold out the hope that the United States would obviously support both communities in Northern Ireland if they would work toward peace.

It was a magnificent day, and it proved to me once again that people sometimes are far ahead of those of us in political life in their yearnings for the right things.

Q Taoiseach, what do you think of yesterday?

MR. BRUTON: I think that the fact that the President came to Belfast and to Derry gave to the people of Northern Ireland who made the peace themselves that sense of international encouragement and support that is so important. They now see what they have won by making peace. So the recognition that came to those people from the most powerful, most significant politician in the world -- if he came in their midst, that showed in the most tangible way possible an appreciation of the dividend of peace. And it was a great tribute for the President to pay.

And I would have to say I think also that the President

has played a key role in bringing peace about, and he is now paying an equally important role in entrenching the peace and bringing reconciliation closer.

Q Mr. President, do you believe that your visit and indeed all-party talks can begin by the February deadline? Would you be very anxious that those talks would begin?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, of course, I hope that the process will succeed. I support it strongly. The Taoiseach and the Prime Minister took some risks, both of them did, to try to keep the peace process going. It is plainly in the interest of the citizens of Northern Ireland and of all those who wish them well here in Ireland and, frankly, throughout Great Britain and throughout the world. It's a very important thing. So, of course, I hope it will work, and I'm going to do everything I can to be supportive.

* * * * *

Q Will you be talking about Bosnia today, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I expect we will, yes.

Q What are some of the issues that you want to discuss about Bosnia?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I just want to basically give the Prime Minister and update on where we are now. And of course, I'm going, when I leave here, to see our troops in Germany who are preparing, and then on Sunday to the European Union. And soon I expect Ireland will be in the leadership of the European Union at a time when we will be, obviously, just in the throes of implementing what we're supposed to do in Bosnia. So we have a lot to talk about.

Q Are you optimistic about what you saw on Capitol Hill yesterday and what you know of how it went with your advisors testifying?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I -- first of all, I thank Senator Dole and Senator McCain for their willingness to support that resolution, which we certainly agree with. And I'm very -- I'm gratified by their response. And I also am pleased that we're having all these hearings on Capitol Hill and that the witnesses are going up; they're giving the best answers they can about what we've done. And I'm looking forward to getting my briefing tomorrow from General Joulwan to see what the NATO planners finally do with the military plan that I authorized General Shalikashvili to support.

So I think right now we're moving toward implementation of the peace agreement. I feel good about it.

Q -- to generate support in the House as well as the Senate?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I take it one step at a time. I think we're making progress. I think we're in better shape as days go by, and I think that the decision by Senator Dole and Senator McCain will help immeasurably, I think, to build the kind of bipartisan support that we need to make this an American effort.

I can tell you this -- as I have been in London and Ireland, I can see that, in addition to the overwhelming preoccupation we've all had with our efforts in Northern Ireland, the ability of the United States to play a leading role in partnership with Europe in dealing with the world's problems in the years ahead is certainly heavily dependent upon our doing our part here in Bosnia, especially after we hosted and did so much to broker the peace.

Q When you talked to the leaders last night in Belfast, were you encouraged? Was there anything that you told them to hold back their old grudges or -- do you have hopes for the future?

THE PRESIDENT: Let me just say -- yes, I was encouraged because I think that Mr. Bruton and Mr. Major came up with a brilliant formulation which enables them to continue to have dialogue with one another without giving up their position. It seems to me that is the genius of that -- and then asking Senator Mitchell, along with two other very distinguished people, to be on this arms decommissioning work, so that it can succeed in parallel. I think it was great foreign relations.

Obviously, none of the people with whom I spoke yesterday changed their positions in their brief meetings with me. The point I tried to make to them was that the two Prime Ministers had given them an honorable way to continue to engage in peace talks without giving up any of their previous positions; and if they looked in the streets of Belfast and Derry, they could see that the young people of their country, without regard to whether they were Protestant or Catholic, desperately wanted this to be resolved. They want to live together; they want to live on equal and honorable terms, and they want to live in peace.

Those were the only points that I could make, and I made them as forcefully as I could.

Q If you would permit me, Mr. President, the decommissioning issue is going to be a very hard nut to crack, isn't it?

THE PRESIDENT: Sure. But that's why they --

Q How do you do it?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, that's why they set it up the way they did. I think it's not just a rational issue, it's an emotional issue. And that's why, I will say again, what the United States -- the role of the United States is not to tell anybody how to solve a specific problem, including the decommissioning problem. We've tried to support those who are taking risks for peace.

The two Prime Ministers have set up a process at considerable risk to themselves which permit all the parties to be heard and permit this very difficult decommissioning issue to be dealt with, and everyone can now proceed forward without giving up any of their own positions at the moment. That is what I thought was so important. We were stalled for too long.

And as I said in Derry, if you look at that statue -- those two statues of reconciliation there, they're reaching out and they're not quite touching. But people are not statues. When you get close like this, you don't stay in that position. You either shake hands, or you drift apart. They've given this process a chance to move to a handshake, and that's all we can hope for. Now we just have to redouble our efforts and keep our attitudes proper and remember the message of the people in the streets, which is that they want this done. They're not interested in all the last details. They want it worked out so they can live on equal and honorable terms and live in peace. And I think that's what the rest of us have to try to give them.

PRIME MINISTER BRUTON: I just want to say the key word is that this is a process, a process in which people can move closer together; a process in which people can give as well as take.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

12:38 P.M. (L)