

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister John Bruton of Ireland in Dublin December 1, 1995

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 to 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 dialog 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 decommis-

sioning, and I am gratified that my good friend Senator George Mitchell is going to lead 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.

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 that 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.

Northern Ireland Peace Process

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 peace 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 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 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.

Prime Minister Bruton. Now an American journalist.

Balkan Peace Process

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 theater. We have been asked how many people are

necessary to support them. 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 theater. There may be some extra costs associated with them that are sizable 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 2 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.

Northern Ireland Peace Process

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 recognized 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.

Balkan Peace Process

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 peace-keeping measure, if they said, "You handle that. You have more money, more soldiers, more interests 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 peace-keeping 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.

NOTE: The President's 108th news conference began at 1:20 p.m. on the steps of the Government Buildings.

Remarks to the Community in Dublin December 1, 1995

Thank you very much. First, let me say to all of you Dubliners and to all Ireland, Hillary and I have loved our trip to your wonderful country. To the Taoiseach and Mrs. Bruton; Lord Mayor Loftus and Lady Mayoress; City Manager Frank Feely; to all the aldermen who conferred this great honor on me. To the Americans in the audience, welcome to all of you. Are there any Irish in the audience? [*Laughter*] I want to say also how pleased I am to be here with a number of Irish-American Members of the United States Congress and the Irish-American Director of the Peace Corps, Mark Gearan; the Irish-American Secretary of Education, Richard Riley; and the Secretary of Commerce, Ron Brown, who wishes today he were Irish-American. Thank you all for being here.

I was on this College Green once before. Yes, in 1968, when I was almost as young as some of the young students over there. Lord Mayor, I never dreamed I would be back here on this College Green in this capacity, but I am delighted to be here. And I thank you.

I am told that in earlier times the honor I have just received, being awarded the Freedom of the City, meant you no longer had to pay tolls to the Vikings. I'm going to try that on the Internal Revenue Service when I get home. I hope it will work. [*Laughter*] Whether it does or not, I am proud to say that I am now a free man of Dublin.

To look out into this wonderful sea of Irish faces on this beautiful Irish day I feel like a real "Dub" today—is that what I'm supposed to say? [*Applause*] Not only that, I know we have a handy football team. [*Laughter*]

Let me say that, as a lot of you know, because of events developing in Bosnia and the prospect of peace there, I had to cut short my trip. But there are a few signs out there I want to respond to. I will return to Ballybunion for my golf game. [*Laughter*]

I am also pleased to announce that President Robinson has accepted my invitation to come to the United States next June to continue our friendship.

There's another special Irish-American I want to mention today and that is our distinguished Ambassador to Ireland, Jean Kennedy Smith, who came here with her brother President Kennedy 32 years ago and who has worked very hard also for the cause of peace in Northern Ireland.

Years ago, Americans learned about Dublin from the stories of James Joyce and Sean O'Casey. Today, America and the world still learn about Dublin and Ireland through the words of Sebastian Barry, Paula Meehan, Roddy Doyle; through the films of Jim Sheridan, Neil Jordan; through the voices of Mary Black and Delores Keane; and yes, through the Cranberries and U2. I hear all about how the world's global culture is becoming more American, but