

Sincerely,

BILL CLINTON

NOTE: This letter was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 28 but was not issued as a White House press release.

Statement on the Northern Ireland Peace Process

February 28, 1996

I welcome the announcement made today by British Prime Minister Major and Irish Prime Minister Bruton of a path to negotiations for a just and lasting settlement in Northern Ireland. I want to express my admiration for these two leaders, who have shown so much courage and determination in the cause of peace. The clear path they have laid out leads to inclusive talks on the future of Northern Ireland, once the cease-fire has been restored. I am convinced that this is the path supported by the overwhelming majority of the people of Northern Ireland, who have so resoundingly rejected violence and embraced peace. I call on those who have resorted to violence to heed the voice of the people and cease their campaign of terror.

The process that Prime Ministers Bruton and Major have announced will begin with intensive consultations among the Governments and the parties to reach agreement on a broadly accept-

able elective process, which will lead directly and without preconditions to all-party negotiations by June 10, 1996. The consultations, to begin early next month, will also address the framework for those negotiations and whether to hold a referendum on support for the peace process. I hope all the parties will commit themselves to participate fully in the process announced today in order to create the lasting peace the people of Northern Ireland deserve.

The United States remains fully committed to supporting the search for peace in which the two Governments, the parties, and the people of Northern Ireland have invested so much. I will remain in close touch with Prime Ministers Major and Bruton, who know they have my full support in their pursuit of peace. We will continue to work with the parties in the same cause.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Entertainment and Media Executives

February 29, 1996

Good morning. Let me once again welcome all of you to the White House and thank you for coming for what is a truly historic meeting. Many of you have come from a long way away, and I am gratified by this astonishing and positive turnout.

Three weeks ago today, I signed the telecommunications bill. This is, as all of you well know, truly landmark legislation that will free the full force of American ingenuity and creativity. It will help us to better enrich minds, to create more jobs, to help us understand one another, to help us enjoy more entertainment, and to help us grow together into the future.

Those of you who are gathered here today will be the ones to unleash this American inge-

nuité. Arguably, you are the most powerful cultural force in the world. But we know, too, that freedom and creativity can truly thrive in a free society that is also a responsible society.

In the State of the Union Address I challenged Congress to pass the telecommunications bill and to include within it the V-chip. Congress did that, agreeing that we should try the V-chip to give parents more control over the content of television programs their children watch, so that those that young people plainly should not watch would at least be subject to some parental control and influence.

I asked you here today so that we could discuss our common responsibilities to help our children and our families. I believe the telecom

bill and the V-chip and, perhaps most important of all, this entirely voluntary gathering of your industry embodies what I see as the three great challenges this country faces as we go through this period of remarkable transformation. The telecom bill plainly will create more opportunities in this new era. The V-chip and your endeavors will enable us to exercise more responsibility to promote the strength and values of family. And if we do these things in a completely voluntary and open way, it will help us to come together as a national community.

There are so many forces in America today that are operating to divide the American people, and I think we should work on uniting ourselves. It's been my experience and observation that when this country is united, we are never defeated; we always achieve what we set out to do. And you have gone a long way toward helping build that kind of community by your very presence here today, and I thank you for that.

We are here to discuss how we can best fulfill our common responsibilities in two ways: first, how we can give parents more control over what

their children see on television; and second, how we can improve children's programming.

Two months ago I doubt that many people thought that this meeting, or any meeting like this, could have even occurred. But we have now made so much progress, and we're on the verge of making new progress. I am excited about what I think we can achieve here today for our children, our families, and our future.

And let me say again, for an industry that gets more than its share of criticism, I think it is worth noting that you have all put aside all your vigorous internal, competitive rivalries and dealt with what I think is a very profound set of questions for the future. And so I thank you for being here. I welcome you here, and I must say I'm very much looking forward to our discussion.

And I'd like to ask the Vice President now, who has worked so hard in helping to organize this meeting, to make a few opening remarks, and then we'll get down to work.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:42 a.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Entertainment and Media Executives *February 29, 1996*

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. I have just concluded a very significant meeting with the leaders of America's media and entertainment industries. I am pleased to report on a breakthrough voluntary agreement to help parents protect their children from violence and adult content on television.

Our purpose in this meeting has been to find out how we can help parents raise their children in the right way and to protect them as they raise them. In this high-technology age, our goal should be more opportunity, more responsibility, and more community, to make changes in the way we do business that will help people to raise their children and bring us together as a people even as we grow the economy and enjoy the opportunities that this new technological era brings.

Just a little over a month ago in my State of the Union Address, I challenged Congress to pass legislation that requires new television

sets to include a V-chip, to give parents the power to screen out violence and objectionable content in television programs. Earlier this month, with the Telecommunications Act, I signed the V-chip into law. Since that time, our administration, spearheaded by the Vice President, has worked with broadcasters, cable firms, production studios, and others to encourage them to find ways to take more responsibilities toward meeting our shared goals. I am gratified that the far-sighted leaders gathered here in this unprecedented meeting have risen to the challenge, and I thank them all.

As a result of our discussions, the media and the entertainment industry has agreed to a voluntary system of ratings for television programs. These ratings will be put in place by the end of this year or the beginning of next year to help parents decide what programs they want their children to watch. And the V-chip will give parents the power to block those programs