

President Soeharto and with Indonesia to try to work through the financial crisis. The IMF has modified its plan on a couple of occasions to try to make it possible to have both reform and to minimize the harm to ordinary citizens in Indonesia.

In terms of who should govern Indonesia, that is a question for the Indonesians to decide, not the G-8. But I do believe that resolving the crisis now requires not only economic reform but also a genuine dialog between the Government and all the elements in society to try to determine how they should go forward. That, to me, is the most important thing. The result of that dialog is for them to decide, not us.

President's Health

Q. Mr. President, how is your back?

President Clinton. Great. Much better today.

NOTE: The exchange began at 1:52 p.m. at the Swallow Hotel. In his remarks, the President referred to President Chirac's wife, Bernadette, Councillor General, Correze Department; and Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu of Israel. President Chirac spoke in French, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks Prior to a Working Lunch With President Chirac in Birmingham

May 15, 1998

I was playing on a basketball team in Oxford, and I can remember playing the University of Birmingham. But it's changed very much. I learned today Birmingham has more meters of canals than Venice. I didn't know that, either. And I went walking—it's amazing—you should take a little time to go for a walk on the canal. It's utterly amazing; it's beautiful—it's beautiful. Mostly it's new development, mostly in the last 10 years, new pubs, new stores. But they have a lot of the old hooks lifting things off the barges—[*inaudible*]*—factories, heavy industry.*

But it's very, very beautiful. It's amazing what they've done. I now see why Tony wanted us to come. I mean it's a real symbol of—[*inaudible*]*—in a new direction. Even if you just have a few minutes, I think, to walk along*

the canal and have some local person explain how it works, as I did, it's fascinating.

So we have to go to work, everyone. [*Laughter*]

They have to work, too. They work hard. When we go on these walks, they have to carry all this heavy equipment. I feel so badly for them. You didn't even get a beer, did you, when we were done? [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 2 p.m. at the Swallow Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom.

Exchange With Reporters During Discussions With Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom in Birmingham

May 15, 1998

Northern Ireland Peace Process

Q. Prime Minister, have you been talking about the further—accord in Ireland?

Prime Minister Blair. Obviously, we have discussed it, and I think that the reason why it's so important for people to understand in Northern Ireland that this is a way forward for the future is that it entrenches for the very first time the principle of consent in both the Constitution of the Republic of Ireland and in the agreements between all the parties. And I want to emphasize particularly that at the heart of this agreement is the belief that we only make progress if people give up violence for good.

And we will make sure in the legislation that comes before our Parliament in order to give effect to this agreement that we make that commitment, very, very clearly expressed in that legislation, so that if people are supporting this agreement, they are supporting an end to violence once and for all.

Q. Mr. President?

President Clinton. Well, first let me say that, obviously, the impending vote is being watched very closely in America. Especially Irish-Americans, Protestant and Catholic alike, are passionately interested in what will happen. But we think it's clearly a decision for the Irish to make.

And I would just say that, to me, as a friend from the outside, it appears to be the chance of a generation for peace. We will stand with