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To continue John Donne's beautiful metaphor, when the bells of Armagh toll, they ring out not just to the Irish of Protestant and Catholic traditions. They ring out to people everywhere in the world who long for peace and freedom and dignity. That is your gift.

We Americans will do what we can to support the peace, to support economic projects, to support education projects. Tomorrow the Secretary of Education will announce a cooperative effort here to help children bring peace by doing cross-community civic projects. We know we have an obligation to you because your ancestors were such a source of strength in America's early history. Because their descendants are building America's future today, because of all that, we have not forgotten our debt to Ulster. But we really owe an obligation to you because none of us are islands; we are all now a part of the main.

Three years ago I pledged that if you chose peace, America would walk with you. You made the choice, and America will honor its pledge.

Thank you for the springtime of hope you have given the world. Thank you for reminding us of one of life's most important lessons, that it is never too late for a new beginning. And remember, you will be tested again and again, but a God of grace has given you a new beginning. Now you must make the most of it, mindful of President Kennedy's adage that ''here on Earth, God's work must truly be our own.''

Your work is the world's work. And everywhere in every corner there are people who long to believe in our better selves, who want to be able to say for the rest of their lives, in the face of any act of madness born of hatred over religious, or racial, or ethnic or tribal differences—they want to be able to shake their fists in defiance and say, ''Do not tell me it has to be this way. Look at Northern Ireland.''

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:00 p.m. at the Mall of Armagh. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Robert Turner; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom and his wife Cherie; First Minister David Trimble and Deputy First Minister Seamus Mallon of the Northern Ireland Assembly; and Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland in Dublin

September 4, 1998

Senator Lieberman's Remarks

Q. Mr. President, do you have any comments on Senator Lieberman's remarks?

The President. I've been briefed on them, and basically I agree with what he said. I've already said that I made a bad mistake, it was indefensible, and I'm sorry about it. So I have nothing else to say except that I can't disagree with anyone else who wants to be critical of what I have already acknowledged was indefensible.

Q. Do you think the Senate is the right format for——

The President. That's not for me to say. That's not for me to say. I don't—I've known Senator Lieberman a long time; we've worked together on a lot of things; and I'm not going to get into commenting on that one way or the other. That's not—it wouldn't be an appropriate thing for me to do.

Q. But do you think it's helpful for him to make that kind of——

The President. It's not for me to say. But there's nothing that he or anyone else could say in a personally critical way that I—that I don't imagine that I would disagree with, since I have already said it myself, to myself. And I'm very sorry about it. There's nothing else I could say.

Q. Mr. President, do you think an official censure by the Senate would be inappropriate?

The President. I just don't want to comment on that. I shouldn't be commenting on that while I'm on this trip, and I don't think that—my understanding is that was not a decision that was made or advocated clearly yesterday. So I don't want to get into that. If that's not an issue, I don't want to make it, one way or the other. I don't think that's appropriate right now.

Northern Ireland Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, it usually seems to take a visit from you to give the peace process a boost. Will we need to see you again?

The President. Well, for the sake of the peace process, I hope not. For my own sake, I hope so. But I hope the next time I come it won't be in aid of the peace process, because I hope it will be institutionalized and off and going.

I do think that a lot of progress has been made. I give the *Taoiseach* a lot of credit, Prime Minister Blair, and the party leaders. I think the statements in the last few days by Gerry Adams and Mr. Trimble's response make me quite hopeful about next week. And then, after that we'll just have to see where we go from there.

Q. Mr. President, do you believe that from what you've heard from political leaders yesterday that David Trimble is now ready to sit down with Gerry Adams in government in Northern Ireland?

The President. Well, first of all, they talked about meeting, and I think they need—I expect that at some point there will be a meeting, and I think that's a good thing. And then, we'll have to take the next steps. I think that what you want is—what we all want is for the agreement to be fully implemented so that all parts of it—the decommissioning, the participation in government by everyone who qualifies by vote of the people—all parts of it will be fully implemented. And I think that eventually it will get there, and I hope it's sooner rather than later.

Q. Mr. President, what were your views of Omagh yesterday? It was a very emotional day. You seemed to work the crowd so well; you spent a lot of time meeting those people there yesterday. What were your feelings?

The President. Well, first of all, like everyone in the world that knew about it, I was just overwhelmed by the dimension of the tragedy and the random, cruel nature of the violence. And my experience has been, dealing with the families who have suffered a similar fate, is that they know there's nothing you can do to bring their loved ones back or bring their limbs back or give them sight or whatever else the problem may be, but sometimes just listening to people's story and letting them say what they hope will happen next—in many cases yesterday, letting them reaffirm their belief in the peace—sometimes that helps.

And what I was hoping to do yesterday was to bring the support of the people of the United States as well as my own and Hillary's to the families there, and just give them a chance to continue the healing process.

I must say I was very, very impressed with the people of the community, who turned out on the street where the bomb had exploded in large numbers to say hello to us and to encourage us. And I'm grateful for that. But it was an amazing experience talking to those families in the building there and just listening to them.

Q. You were clearly moved by it.

The President. Anyone would have been.

Q. Mr. President, where do you rank the Northern Ireland peace process among the policy initiatives you've pursued in office?

The President. Oh, I don't know about ranking. It was important to me. Once I realized that there was something the United States could do, which probably happened somewhere in late 1991, long before I was elected, I decided I would try. And I just hope it succeeds.

I believe that—at the end of the cold war, I think the United States has a particular responsibility that goes beyond my personal passion for the Irish question to do two things. One is to do whatever we can, wherever we can, to try to minimize the impact of ethnic and religious and tribal and racial conflicts. And we're in this position of responsibility there because of where we find ourselves at the end of the cold war.

In addition to that, I think we have a particular responsibility to try to organize the world against the new security threats of the 21st century, the terrorism and narcotraffickers, the potential for the spread of weapons of mass destruction. And I have tried to do that.

I don't suspect that either of those jobs will be completely done in 2001 when I leave office, but at least the world will be on the way to having a framework to deal with both the opportunities for peace and the challenges to security. And I think you have to see the Irish question in that context, apart from my personal feelings about it. Because

if you, all of you—the Prime Minister of Great Britain and the *Taoiseach* and the Irish party leaders—if you're able to make this peace go, as I said in Armagh yesterday, then we can say to the places—to the Middle East; we can say in the Aegean; we can say in the Indian subcontinent; we can say in the tribal strife of Africa, ''Look at this thing that happened in Northern Ireland. There's the Troubles for 30 years, but there were conflicts for hundreds of years. This can be done.''

And so the potential impact of resolving this could wash over many more people than just those that live on this island.

Military Action Against Terrorist Sites

Q. Mr. President, how do you reconcile the peaceful strides you've made in the Northern process with your foreign policy and your reaction to the threat of Islamic militants and the airstrikes on Afghanistan and Sudan?

The President. Well, I think you have to, first of all, look at what happened in the Middle East and here. In the Middle East and here, I have worked hard to get people to turn away from terror toward a peace process, not just the Irish parties that had once participated in violence, but in the Middle East it's the same. The PLO has moved away from violence towards the peace process.

The problem with the bombings in our Embassies in Africa is that they were carried out by an operation which does not belong to a nation and does not have a claim or a grievance against the particular nation that it wants to resolve so that it can be part of a normal civic life. It is an organization without that kind of political agenda. Its agenda is basically to strike out against the United States, against the West, against the people in the Middle East it doesn't like. And it is funded entirely from private funds under the control of Usama bin Ladin, without the kind of objectives that we see that even on the darkest days the Irish parties that were violent had, the PLO had.

So it's an entirely different thing. And I think it's quite important that people see it as different, because one of the things that we have to fight against is having the world's narcotraffickers tie up with these multinational or non-national global terrorist groups in a way that will provide a threat to every country in the world. It's just an entirely different situation.

Q. *Taoiseach*, how important was the President to the developments that took place earlier this week which seemed to have injected a new momentum into the peace process?

Prime Minister Ahern. They were immensely important, because even if Omagh never happened and the terrible tragedy that it was, in early September we had to focus back, preparing for the next meeting of the Assembly, for heading on to preparations for the executive North-South Council and all of the other aspects of the agreement. And we needed to focus very clearly on those. And what the President's visit has done is, it has got the parties to, I think, move what might have taken weeks and months over a very short period, because they looked at the agenda that was set before us, and they've made the moves.

Now, there are clearly more moves to be made. And I think what the President said in Armagh last night we would totally agree with in the Irish Government, because I think he's laying down for us, and for all of us, that there is a path to follow. If we are sensible, if we're brave, and then we follow that path, the reward is peace and stability and confidence. If we don't, well, then the future is as gloomy as the past.

And I just believe that this visit at this time, it has been immensely important. It's given confidence to us all, I think, to move on. It's given confidence, I think, to the Unionist Party and Sinn Fein to make moves that are brave and efficient to the process. And we're very grateful not only for this visit, not only for the last visit, but the fact that this President of the United States has given us an enormous amount of time, a huge amount of support, and an enormous amount of encouragement to move forward. And we're very grateful for that.

Q. How will history judge his role, President Clinton's role, in the Northern Ireland peace process?

Prime Minister Ahern. Well, I always say, President Carter and U.S. Presidents and successive Presidents and administrations

have taken an interest in affairs, and a supportive interest. But the facts are, never before have we had such intense and sustained contact from the United States President, and that, in a period when we desperately need it to be able to move forward. I said, I think, in Washington last March that maybe it was the luck of the Irish, but we don't take it for granted, and we're very grateful for it.

NOTE: The exchange began at 11:12 a.m. in the Office of the Taoiseach. In his remarks, the President referred to Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams; First Minister David Trimble of the Northern Ireland Assembly; and Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks at a Reception With Community Leaders in Dublin

September 4, 1998

Thank you. Thank you, *Taoiseach,* Celia, ladies and gentlemen. Hillary and I and all of our American delegation are delighted to be here. I've been looking out in the crowd, and I see some Americans who have swelled the ranks even since I arrived in Ireland. Anytime we can pad your crowd, *Taoiseach,* we want to do that. [*Laughter*]

I'd like to thank the Royal College of Surgeons for making it possible for us to be here and for setting a standard for international excellence. I know there are now students from over 40 nations here at this distinguished institution.

If you would permit, before I get into my prepared remarks, I think that, for the benefit of the Americans here and because it's my only chance to talk to the press, I would like to make just a couple of comments on the terrible tragedy of the crashing of Swissair Flight 111.

The victims, their families, their friends are very much in our thoughts and prayers. A very large number of those victims were American citizens but also a large number were Europeans. And if you've been reading about it, you know that. It now appears that there were no survivors in what is the worst tragedy in the history of Swissair, with its very fine record. I have been fully briefed on the extensive efforts under way to recover the victims and to uncover what happened. And we will continue to do whatever we can to support the truly extraordinary efforts of the Canadian authorities. And I want to thank them for what they have done.

Just for right now, I would like to ask all of you in your own way, if we could, just to take a moment to reflect in silence on this tragedy and on any senseless loss of life and ask that their families, of the people who were killed, be strengthened at this moment. Thank you very much.

[*At this point, a moment of silence was observed.*]

Amen. Thank you.

Let me say to all of you, it's great to be back in Dublin. Even though there is a little rain in the air today, it's always bright and sunny for me here. The day that we were in College Green in 1995 will go down for me as one of the great days of my Presidency and, indeed, one of the great days of my life.

But these days have been good as well, working to cement the peace process. And I can't say enough about the role of the *Taoiseach* in making this Irish peace process come to fruition. I want to say a little more about it later in specific terms as we look ahead, but I just want to say to all you, you can be very proud of his leadership, as well as your own overwhelming vote for peace a few months ago.

I'd also like to thank Ireland for setting a good example by building bridges to other nations by being such an open economy, by encouraging business ventures from around the world, and by working together here at home.

We were talking before we came in about this whole concept of social partners and how all the elements of Irish society have worked together to give you what is, I believe, the highest growth rate in Europe now—of any country of Europe—because you have worked together to draw out the strengths of every element of this society and to minimize conflict.

And all I can say is I hope there will be more of this in the years ahead. I hope that success will whet your appetite for working together instead of causing, as success sometimes does, people to forget what brought