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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

them to the point of success. Because the Irish story is a truly astonishing, astonishing thing that I believe can be a model for nations large and small throughout the world.

There has literally never been a better time, I don't suppose, to be Irish because of the economic success, because of the renaissance in writing, filmmaking, because of what so many people are doing in so many ways to advance the cause of peace. Of course, for me, your overwhelming vote for peace and your constant leadership for the peace process over the last several years are the most important things. And I would like to thank you on behalf of the American people for what you have done.

I can also say that—to Prime Minister Ahern, that peace literally would not have happened, in my judgment, if it hadn't been for him. He led a campaign sometimes under great personal duress. His pleas for peace began early in his service. He has been fair and open. He has been terrifically effective in working with Prime Minister Blair and all the parties in both communities. There are many people from many backgrounds who deserve a lot of credit for this peace, including George Mitchell, whose name was mentioned earlier, but none more than Bertie Ahern. And I thank him for that.

The last time I saw the *Taoiseach* I believe was on St. Patrick's Day in Washington. He always comes there and gives me my shamrocks and puts me in a good frame of mind. [*Laughter*] And then we always have a celebration at the White House in the evening, and everybody is in a good frame of mind. [*Laughter*] But we were especially happy this St. Patrick's Day because the sense of peace was in the air. We thought there was a real possibility for all that has happened to occur.

We now know from the tragedy of Omagh and from those three small boys that were killed that there will be those who test the peace, who do not want to move into tomorrow, who are literally trapped in the patterns, the hatreds, the mindset of yesterday. I think the most important thing that Hillary and I saw in Omagh yesterday was that even the people who have suffered the most from the testers of the peace don't want to give in to them. They don't want to give in. They don't want to go back. They want to summon their strength and courage and lean on their friends and neighbors and go forward.

So the most important thing I can say to you here today is, I hope you will continue to be a model for the world in responsible citizenship. Ireland—there hasn't been a day in the last 40 years that some citizen of this great country has not been abroad in another land working for the cause of peace. I hope you will continue to be a model of an open economy, where people work together, instead of fight with each other, to increase wealth, employment, opportunity, and social harmony. And I hope you will continue to labor for peace here, because if we can complete this peace process, as I said to the citizens of Armagh yesterday, you can't imagine what it will enable the United States to do in trying to stand up for peace in other parts of the world where people have fought over their religious, their racial, their ethnic, their tribal differences. I can always then say, no, no, no, look at Ireland, when they tell me it can't be done.

So please know that the rest of the world has an enormous stake in the way your society conducts itself, in your economic success, in your social harmony, and in your passion for peace. So far, you are doing much better than any of the rest of us could ever have dreamed or hoped for, and the world is in your debt.

The United States is proud of our Irish ties, and I am personally extremely grateful for what has been done here in these last few years.

Thank you very, very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:05 p.m. at the Royal College of Surgeons. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland; Celia Larkin, who accompanied Prime Minister Ahern; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; and former Senator George J. Mitchell, who chaired the multiparty talks in Northern Ireland.

Remarks to Employees at Gateway, Inc., in Santry, Ireland

September 4, 1998

Thank you for the wonderful welcome, the waving flag, the terrific shirts. I want one of