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And so as we move forward, you ought to remember that one of the reasons that the Good Friday accords were overwhelmingly embraced by the people in the Republic and in Northern Ireland, is that they could visualize a different tomorrow. And the American Ireland Fund helped them to do that, and you should be very proud of yourself.

But one of the things that I have learned from the Middle East, from Northern Ireland, from Kosovo and Bosnia, from the tribal wars in Africa I've tried to help deal with, is that in addition to people being able to visualize a different tomorrow, you have to have leaders who can let go.

There was reconciliation in South Africa because Nelson Mandela could let go; and he had a whole lot more to let go of than most of the Irish do. I mean, let's fess up here. [*Laughter*] He had a lot more to let go of than most of the Irish do. But because he could let go, we were able to make peace. And that's why I said what I did about Hillary and the Vital Voices.

We've had some of these women in the White House in the Oval Office. They're very practical. I mean, people that have buried their children. They still get up in the morning and they have to go to the store and buy food, and they have to do this, that, and the other thing—do practical things, and they are enormously practical people. And they have no vested interest in the continuation of the conflict.

And so I say to you that helping these people in Vital Voices will make more than the park that Hillary talked about; there will be lots of parks like that and lots of things that people will do together. And you've got to get these kids out here. You see—if you see kids in Ireland, if you see kids in the Middle East, if you see kids anywhere who get to each other soon enough before they're taught how to hate, they change the whole future.

And the last thing I want to say is this: You all—those of you who are really interested in this, you know what the deal is now. We had a big election, and the Good Friday accord was approved. Then we had elections for Parliament, and they worked. They were honest and they were full and everybody got into the Parliament at Stormont. And I went there and shook hands with them all.

But the agreement that said anybody that got over a certain percentage of vote in the election would also be in the executive branch—and Sinn Fein got enough to get in—the agreement also said that there would be decommissioning that would be finished within 18 months according to a schedule to be set up by the Commission, which now is headed by General de Chastelain, the former Canadian Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

So we're back to that old trust issue because the Unionists don't want Sinn Fein in the executive until they have a symbolic act of decommissioning, and the IRA say, ''Well, we don't want to do that until we know we're not going to get snookered.'' Well, obviously, this is at some level, it almost looks like two kids daring each other to go first.

But if you look beneath that, the IRA say, ''Well, it's our people that voted for the peace. We wanted to render our arms to them, not to the other side and have them claim that they got some victory over us; this is a victory that the people together voted for.'' So this argument goes on endlessly.

Now, let me tell you, the good news is that everybody on all sides agrees to all parts of the Good Friday accords; everybody on all sides agrees that it all has to be done by next May. Nobody wants to get rid of anything else about the agreement, and the only problem we've got left is the sequencing of standing up the executive branch and decommissioning. That is all that will be discussed when Senator Mitchell reconvenes the group on September 6th. And when the Good Friday agreements were reached, it was anticipated that roadblocks might develop, and so they set this up.

So all I would say to all of you is that part of this problem is trust. And at some point, they're going to have to figure out a way that they're both trusting each other at the same time. So you get out of this, ''you go first.'' You know, it's like two kids standing on a big old diving board holding hands and looking down into a deep pool.

Part of it is that, unlike the women that Hillary deals with in Vital Voices, some of these folks have been doing this for so long that their whole identity is caught up in the

continuation of the conflict. I say this in all respect. I'm not attacking them, but it's true.

So what we have to do is to find ways to help them let go. And that's why the work of the American Ireland Fund is still important. Even though the economy is going like crazy—I've talked to Tony Blair and Bertie Ahern about this repeatedly—we have got to target those critical decisionmakers and give them an image of a life they can have that will be meaningful and rich—I don't mean materially rich; I mean it'll have a lot of texture and meaning and standing in the community if they let go.

So thank you for what you've done. Thank you for supporting Vital Voices. The women are doing better than the men now in promoting peace, for the reasons I've said. [*Laughter*] But this deal in September may be our last chance for a generation, and we cannot blow it. It's too late to turn back now, as Mr. Morrison sang. [*Laughter*] It is too late. And so we need the voices. I can look at people in this room that—I know I've been working on this now with many of you for a long time. We have got to help them let go. And you can do it.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:25 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Bob and Mia Matthews; event cochairs Jack Manning and Lyle Howland; Tim Russert, Washington bureau chief, NBC News; Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams; former President Nelson Mandela of South Africa; Gen. John de Chastelain, Canadian Defense Forces, member and chair, Independent International Commission on Decommissioning; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland; and former Senator George J. Mitchell, who chaired the multiparty talks in Ireland. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

August 21, 1999

Good morning. Like many Americans, Hillary and I are fortunate to be spending part of our summer vacation enjoying the splendors of nature—strolling clean, beautiful beaches, breathing the fresh ocean air, watching the stunning sunset—reminding us that we must do everything we can to preserve this glorious land of ours for generations yet to come.

President Theodore Roosevelt once committed our Nation to leaving this land even a better land for our descendants than it is for us. Vice President Gore and I have tried hard to fulfill his vision. We protected the Yellowstone Park from the threat of mining, preserved the red rock canyons of Utah, saved age-old redwoods in California's Headwaters Forest. We launched the most ambitious restoration effort ever in the magnificent Florida Everglades. And we're acting to restore healthy air and pristine skies to our national parks so that future generations can see and enjoy them, just as the first explorers did.

Last year, at my request, Congress approved new funding to protect other precious lands. Today I'm pleased to announce our latest efforts. We've just reach a landmark agreement to protect more than 9,000 acres of critical land next to Yellowstone, another milestone in our effort to preserve the matchless wonders of America's first national park.

Permanently protecting these lands will help to ensure the survival of the bison and other herds that roam the wilds of Yellowstone. And by removing a threat to the underground springs that feed Yellowstone's geysers, we'll ensure that Old Faithful remains faithful for years to come. A hundred years from now, families still will be able to experience the magnificent glory of Yellowstone.

We're also protecting several other natural and historic sites across our country, from ancient ruins in Bandelier National Monument, to the birthplace of Martin Luther King, Jr., to California's spectacular Big Sur coast. We can all be proud of these latest additions to our Nation's endowment. Yet, with more Americans visiting our national parks and forests than ever before, we must do more. Every child deserves a chance to hike in an old-growth forest or wade in a clear, cool stream. And our land is more than a haven for wildlife or a vacation spot; it embodies our very history and our culture.

In too many places, vital pieces of this heritage are disappearing. Once lost, they can't