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4 OCTOBER 1994

TO HQ FROM WASHINGTON
FOR GERRY CORR FROM NOEL KILKENNYADAMS AT THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB

1. Attached is a transcript of Adams' address today at the National Press Club in Washington. Many of the themes will be familiar to you as they have been repeated throughout his visit to the U.S. In his final remarks Adams jokingly refers to it as his "Single Transferable Speech".

2. You will note that in the Q&A session, in responding to a question about apathy south of the border he said

"some people have said that the reason why there isn't a united Ireland is not just because of the London Government but may well have been because of the policy of the Dublin Government. I think that this present administration, Mr Reynolds', has made huge strides to reverse all of that".

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National Press Club

Luncheon

Tuesday, October 4, 1994

SPEAKER:

GERRY ADAMS, PRESIDENT, SINN FEIN

MODERATED BY: GIL KLEIN
National Press Club Ballroom

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MR. KLEIN: (Sounds gavel.) Good afternoon. Welcome to the National Press Club. My name is Gil Klein. I'm the club's president, and a national correspondent for Media General Newspapers, writing for the Richmond Times-Dispatch, the Tampa Tribune, and the Winston-Salem Journal.

I'd like to welcome my fellow club members in the audience today, as well as those of you who are watching us on C-SPAN, or listening to us on National Public Radio or the Global Internet Computer Network.

Before introducing our head table, I'd like to mention some upcoming speakers. On Wednesday, October 5th, Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell, who is retiring at the end of this session, will reflect on his life and public service. On Friday, October 7th, we have two luncheons scheduled. One is with Peter Lynch, vice chairman of Fidelity Investments; and the other is with Nelson Mandela, the president of South Africa, who will speak about the socioeconomic changes in the new democratic South Africa.

Audio and videotapes of Press Club lunches are available by calling 1-800-500-9911. If you have any questions for our speaker, and I certainly trust that you will, please write them on the cards available for you at the tables, pass them forward, and I will ask as many as time permits.

I would now like to introduce our head table guests, and ask them to stand briefly when their names are called. From your right is John Farrell of the Boston Globe; Stephen Robinson of the Daily Telegraph; Pat McGrath of Fox Broadcasting; Pat Reilly of the National Desk of the Washington Post; William Headline, Washington bureau chief of CNN; Frank Green of the Richmond Times-Dispatch; Sean Cronin, author and journalist and former Washington bureau chief of the Irish Times; skipping over our speaker for a moment, we have Jack Reynolds of Jack Reynolds Communications, and the member of the Club's Speaker's Committee who arranged today's luncheon; Mairead Kean, member of the executive committee and director of education for Sinn Fein; Robert Doherty, news editor of Reuters News Service; Jeannye Thornton of U.S. News and World Report; Conor O'Clery of the Irish Times; George Watson of ABC News; and John Friedland of the Manchester Guardian. Now you can applaud. (Applause.)

Our speaker today is Gerry Adams, president of Sinn Fein, the political arm of

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the outlawed Irish Republican Army. Mr. Adams has been described in a number of ways, depending on which side of the Irish issue one stands. To his supporters he is the man who is trying to take the gun out of Irish politics. To many Protestant Unionists in Northern Ireland, and to a considerable number of British, he is, to quote one British journalist, "an apostle of death and destruction in Northern Ireland." Probably the most objective description these days is that Gerry Adams is a man on a tightrope, balancing the desire of Northern Ireland's Catholics to be a free, self-governing part of the Irish Republic, against the historic antagonisms with the Protestant majority in Ulster, as well as British constitutional claims to the north. Mr. Adams himself spent four years in British jails. But he was not without company: his father and uncle and two cousins were there as well.

Joining Mr. Adams on the tightrope this week is the Clinton administration. It must balance its desire for peace in Northern Ireland with the United States's commitment to its chief ally, Great Britain. Everything the administration does will be symbolic. The Washington Post reported this morning that President Clinton lifted the long-standing U.S. ban on official contact with Sinn Fein, and invited Mr. Adams to, quote, "begin a dialogue" with Washington. After a weekend of negotiations, the administration raised the level of U.S. officials that Mr. Adams will meet today at the State Department directly after this luncheon.

But Mr. Adams will not be welcomed at the White House, at least not this time. All this comes about because of what Sinn Fein calls its peace initiative: the IRA's unilateral announcement August 31st of a cease-fire. Mr. Adams is touring the United States saying the IRA wants peace. Now the British government must decide whether to grasp the opportunity. After hundreds of years of conflict in Ireland, is peace at hand? Mr. Adams, we await your assessment. Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in a warm Press Club welcome for Mr. Gerry Adams. (Applause.)

MR. ADAMS: (Speaks in Gaelic.)

Can I say first of all that I am very pleased to be here to address the Press Club, and I want to extend my thanks to the Club and to the president for its invitation, and I hope that we will have a discussion when I finish this submission. I also want to thank Mr. Reynolds for the work he has done in making this happen a lot easier perhaps that it would otherwise have.

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I think it's - and I fear to joke, but the name of the organization which I represent is Sinn Fein. (Laughter, applause.) I would love to be here today to tell you that we have peace in Ireland. But I can't. However, it is my fervent belief that peace is within our grasp, and that God's bearing me that I would be able to come back here, and I hope sooner rather than later, to tell you that we have peace, that we have justice, and we have freedom, and we have prosperity.

The IRA announcement, described once again in a White House press release as historic, has of course moved the entire peace process forward. But as I stand here today, other armed groups - the British Army, which is the largest force and which is in occupation of an area approximately the size of Rhode Island - that army has so far refused to cease, to complete cease, its military operations. And of course its allies in the loyalist death squad are continuing with theirs. So, since the IRA announcement a number of Catholics have been killed; there have been a series of bomb attacks, including on my offices on the Falls Road and on the family home of at least one Sinn Fein elected counselor. So we still have to move the process forward.

However, I think it's worth remembering just within the last few days what the poet, the Irish poet, Seamus Heaney said. He said we have a space in which hope can grow. And I think that is the challenge facing all of us -- you as well as me -- to widen that space. And the delicate flower, the delicate seed which has been planted -- hope can flourish. Hope can grow and peace can be built out of the decades of conflict and violence.

I think it's worth noting that a number of individuals played very courageous leadership roles in creating the conditions for recent developments. John Hume, the leader of the SDLP, in a very creative way engaged with me over a very long time to bring about what has been described as a consensus among nationalists in the north of Ireland, and the active engagement of the Dublin government in that, and the piece of the jigsaw provided by our friends here in Irish America. and then the active and proactive engagement by President Clinton - all helped to create conditions wherein the IRA decision could be announced and become a reality.

So when I come here, it is to give an assessment, but it is also to thank those people here who have kept the faith, who have not forgotten their roots, who see an opportunity and who have helped to create this opportunity, and also to commend

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President Clinton for the manner in which he has made peace in Ireland a foreign policy concern of the White House.

Coming here on a very hectic and packed itinerary, where it becomes difficult even to stay in a vertical position for too long, there are a number of personal little moments which I think have penetrated through all of the rest of the hype. One was that I went to Ellis Island, courtesy of the New York Port Police. And I should say on the record that my encounters here with policemen have been much more friendly -- (laughter) -- and in many ways unprecedented. And also I have to say the same for your judges: whatever their faults, I have had a very enjoyable and uncharacteristic series of encounters with judges, in conditions which do not apply precisely or exactly back home.

But we went to Ellis Island. And, as I said, it became by way almost of a pilgrimage.

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of what it must have been like for people from all over the world to come here and to go through that great hall to be inspected or checked, not knowing whether they would be accepted here or rejected. And I asked the guide because I have not that experience, but anyone who has been through prison is taken through a -- (inaudible) -- and checked and inspected and forcibly scrubbed and so on. And I asked the guide if the immigrants, or potential immigrants, could see the mainland from the island, and I was told that they could. And to be so near, to be within sight after presumably a very difficult arduous journey, and to see beyond across the waves what was the land of hope -- (background noise -- that must be, maybe perhaps Mr. Major trying to get through -- (laughter and applause).

And I think also --

MR. KLEIN: Don't worry about that.

MR. ADAMS: And I think also the diversity, the diversity of people who come through there from Europe, from Ireland, of course. Jewish people, all from all over the world, and then to come here and -- perhaps a small historical accident that the first immigrant processed was an Irish woman. So then when I come here to Washington I

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am reminded that we who could not live in our own country, we who because of the repression at home, because of famine, because of the economic climate, when we came here we were able to join with all of these other races, all of these other nations, and build this union into what it is today.

I am also very mindful, and I note -- the term Protestants and Catholics has been used, and the struggle in Ireland is not about Catholics or Protestants -- I note that the Protestant Irish men and Irish women who joined with the Catholics and the dissenters in a great effort to rid Ireland of British rule. The -- (inaudible) -- here gives 13 presidents to this United States of America. And the war here, the Revolutionary War here, the War of Independence, the rights of man, Thomas Payne, all of that and all that happened in the French Revolution, is where Irish Republicanism comes from, where it springs from.

I also, when I was here went to Arlington Cemetery, early yesterday morning. Only the magnitude of that place differs from the too many cemeteries which I have attended back home over the years in Ireland. And I think also when we think of what Ireland has given -- no better or no worse than anyone else -- what Ireland has given to the U.S.A., I think it's important to note that what we're asking in some small way is for the U.S.A. to give us back at home in Ireland what people have here as a matter of every day rights. What you take for granted here is foreign in the British occupied part of the -- (inaudible).

So the U.S.A., the administration on my visit has taken in not just Irish-America, but we have talked to people from the Jewish community, we have talked to people from the Italian community, we will talk to Hispanics and we will talk to the Black Caucus, to people who have come from African roots. All of that I think sends powerful encouraging signals back home.

And I have to say that I do not believe that we would have reached this decisive juncture in our history, this grassroots if you like in Anglo-Irish relationships, if it was not for this engagement, if it was not for this concern, if it was not for this interest in moving the situation forward.

So I have to ask today why can the British government not follow through also. How come I hear from home that Patrick Mayhew (ph), the British Minister, today

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reaffirmed that I would be continued to be banned from entering Britain. Today he said that ~~eternal~~ exile from what's allegedly one part of the United Kingdom for someone like myself would continue. And how bizarre that situation is that I can come here to the capital city of the most powerful nation in the world, and leave this luncheon to talk to White House officials and others, and counted out of my own country or in Britain of the same conversation.

And that again is I think a timely reminder of almost a subconscious positive element to the U.S. engagement. The last time I came here my voice and the voices of other SINNSEIN representatives could not be heard on the British Broadcasting media, and journalists and broadcasters here were amazed at this element of British democracy. And the British I think were rightly embarrassed, so that when it came to me returning, an order in my opinion to escape further embarrassment they moved to remove that censorship ban.

And so it I would presume and I would hope with the matter of my exclusion from Britain that the ridiculous, bizarre circumstance that discussions which can happen here cannot happen back at home or in Britain will also be removed.

The British government refusal to enter into talks is all the more remarkable when one considers that up until November of last year, at a time when the IRA -- (inaudible) -- had not faced, at a time when Mr. Major did not suggest that he had a pay settlement, we in SINNSEIN and his government engaged in lengthy discussions. So here we have a situation where during that period of conflict there were talks, and Mr. Major did the right thing, and here when there is a peace settlement on the horizon, when the IRA has ceased, when SINNSEIN's democratic mandate has been recognized at home by the Dublin government and by governments throughout the world, that the British government appears to stall.

And if one is looking for a reason for that, it's my view that it's merely tactical. It's my view that the British -- and I think they're wrong -- wish to reduce this opportunity for peace, that they wish to slow the momentum. I think it's the duty of everyone who has any notion of what democracy means, who has any notion of what is wrong in Ireland, who has any notion of what it takes to rectify those injustices, then they must call for peace talks now.

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And we have to say if it works in the Middle East, why not in Ireland. And on a day in which Nelson Mandela, the President of South Africa, returns to Washington, we have to say if it works in South Africa, why not in Ireland? Why not? Have the Irish people not got the wit, have we not got the intelligence, do we not have the creativity, is the air in some way strange, is there something in our genes, is the water that we drink in some way polluted, that we need a foreign power to come in and look after us?

And the question of the unionists, the unionists are my people. I may not agree with them, but they are my people. They have as much right to be on the island of Ireland as I have. They have as much right and it is necessary to have their participation in building a new Ireland as I have. And let me say as someone who comes from the occupied area, in which Catholics are still discriminated against, and which there is still a permanent state of emergency, and who has gone through the whole sad litany of imprisonment, and been shot and have my family home and my wife and my son subjected to bomb attacks -- and I don't believe that I or those I represent have any monopoly on suffering, and I acknowledge quite freely, and I've done so in Ireland, the suffering which has been inflicted by Republicans -- let me say that under no circumstances will Irish Nationalists or Irish Republicans ever inflict upon Protestants what was inflicted by unionists upon Catholics. That is not the type of Ireland which we want. (Applause.)

What we want are peace talks. What is at the core of this peace process is an ability for people to sit down, to discuss, to agree, to be flexible, and to move the situation on. And there are three core areas. There is, of course. And there are three core areas. There is, of course, the vast question of the constitutional and political future of the people of the island of Ireland. And we concede that that will take time, and that needs agreement. That needs the full participation of everyone in order to build a lasting and durable and permanent peace.

The other core issues need less time. Demilitarization needs to commence and to be speeded up immediately. Issues of democratic rights need no discussion, either people have democratic rights or we don't. And if we don't, then they should be restored to us as speedily as possible. So there are the three main areas which need a focus. What you take here for granted, as I've said before, is foreign in the occupied area. I know of no institution like this -- none. And I've thought about this. I know

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of no institutional like this back home in the occupied part of Ireland.

Yet in every city here, they have such institutions, perhaps not of this prestige, but certainly it is here as a matter of fact. The right to silence, the right to trial by jury, the right to free assembly, the right to national rights, the right to all of these basic requirements are absent from British democracy in the part of Ireland that I come from. I also think that it's important to note that the people of Britain also want to see an end to this long conflict.

So we have a moment, an opportunity, a chance in our history to move from conflict into building our own history. We have an opportunity to put behind all of the baggage and the burden of history. We need only to proceed on the basis of equality; no preconditions, no vetos; a level playing patch of people coming together to work whatever we can work out. I have doubts, as I've said earlier, with the elements which make up political and social and economic life here. I'm asked on many occasions, do I think, do I believe that I will see a united Ireland, and I have to say yes. I do believe it.

Had I come here two years ago and outlined how far we would have moved by now, people would have scoffed. Had I come here five years ago and talked about the developments in South Africa or the unity of Germany, or the demise of the Soviet Union, people would have scoffed. So there's no such thing as an intractable problem if there's goodwill and political will to change it.

So I think what we want now, and what we need now, and I have had signals of this all over my travels is that goodwill harness into the development of this peace process. A friend of mine, Bobby Sands, died on hunger strike, and in his writings, he wrote in terms of the future of Ireland -- and we should remember that hunger strike is the ultimate pacifistic, non-violent act of protest -- and Bobby and nine other prisoners died in the cell blocks of Long Kesh. And he wrote, "Our victory will be the laughter of our people. Our victory will be the laughter of our people. Our revenge will be the liberation of all." That, I think, is the future that is before us. That is the opportunity which we have. I would ask you to seize it; to move us all forward and to bring peace and freedom and justice to all the people of the island of Ireland. (Untranslated Gaelic phrase.)

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MR. KLEIN: Thank you very much. The first question is some practical things. Who are you going to meet with at the State Department, and what can you accomplish by meeting with these particular people?

MR. ADAMS: Well, I can't remember precisely who I'm going to meet with, but we have never dictated who we should meet with. We are meeting with senior officials from the White House and from the administration. I think we need to give an assessment, and we will do that in some detail. I think we need to make suggestions which will encourage a continuation of the very proactive role which President Clinton has taken. And I think that we need to seek to move the entire situation on in terms of resolution of the conflict, and also in terms of what is called a normalization of relationships between Sinn Fein and the administration here.

MR. KLEIN: Is the United States the only country that can serve as a guarantor, mediator of peace in Northern Ireland. Can peace come without U.S. guarantees?

MR. ADAMS: Well, Sinn Fein identified some years ago, the international dimension, the international community as being a decisive influence of moving the situation forward. And we identified the U.S. as one element in that. The European Union is another element. There is goodwill, and there has been considerable support in the last month or so for the entire process. I think if one reflects that we have come to this point more speedily, because of the positive engagement of the U.S. administration, so can peace be brought about without the U.S. involvement? I would think not. I would think it needs, when one is faced with the reality of such a long conflict, it needs someone from outside the frame to send encouraging signals.

I think that a stalemate situation needs someone to come and point the way forward; I think that's what happened in South Africa. I think that's what happened in the Middle East. And it may not be necessary in Ireland; it may not be necessary. But if that facility is required, if peace in Ireland is dependent upon encouragement from the U.S., then that encouragement should be there when asked for.

MR. KLEIN: Would you have used the word permanent to describe the IRA cease fire if it had brought a meeting with President Clinton?

MR. ADAMS: I didn't call the IRA cease fire. The people who deserve the

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credit for that are not only those who I have identified in creating the conditions, but the people who called the cease fire was the IRA leadership. The people who wrote the statement was the IRA leadership. The question of permanent, I have to suggest, is one of semantics as far as the British government is concerned. I have offered the suggestion that had the IRA statement said permanent, the British may have said, well, it didn't say complete. So I think it's important that we don't get distracted into a semantical word game.

I think the term used here is hair splitting. At no time did anyone from Sinn Fein dictate or argue or suggest, in any way, what way we should be met. As someone who has given my whole life to stopping interference in my affairs by a British government, it would be totally ungracious for me to come here and dictate our demands, what way your administration should work. I think it's important that Mr. Clinton has engaged proactively. In his last speech at the U.N. General Assembly, I think on Monday of last week, I expressed confidence in the peace process and said that we have history on our side. And I share that belief.

MR. KLEIN: How long can the cease fire last? How long can the extremists on either side be really tamed?

MR. ADAMS: Really?

MR. KLEIN: Tamed.

MR. ADAMS: Right. Well, the word tamed, I don't think is the an advisable one. The situation is that in my view, the peace process is under no threat from any element or faction within the broad republic constituency. I think that the men and women who took that position surely must have considered provocation by the loyalists and by the British. And I do think it's a mark -- whatever one may have thought of the IRA, and I don't come here and support either Sinn Fein or the IRA. I ask people to suspend judgement in all of these matters, and simply to accept there's an opportunity for peace which needs to be built upon.

But whatever one thinks of the IRA, I think it's a remarkable indication of its discipline, that here we are, despite the provocations of the last month, there's not even a whisper of dissent and the fears of extreme provocation.

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The loyalists -- and this is important when one considers the strength of censorship and the wall of silence which has been built around Ireland -- the loyalist operations which you may be familiar with, the killings in Millme Cemetery of the Generals of the people, the IRA volunteers who were killed at Gibraltar, the mass attacks, mass killings of the Drummer shops, even on the night that the Irish football, the soccer team here, was playing in the World Cup, the killings back in Lough Haven and Keel Doagh were carried out with weapons supplied by British military intelligence. And one has to concede that while the loyalists have their own agenda, political and military, that you cannot divorce them from the collusion which is there from the British military intelligence community; and similarly with the British army. The British army can be stopped now. The British army are a regular army and are allegedly under the direct control of the British government. So I wouldn't expect any of those forces to be tamed, but I would expect them to respond with the same generosity and boldness and discipline that the IRA have. And that's the way to move the process forward, to stop the killings and start the talking. (Scattered applause.)

MR. KLEIN: A number of questions on the possibility of a referendum in Northern Ireland. The British government has been adamant in proposing that a vote on Irish unification should only include voters in the north. Doesn't this proposal establish a loyalist veto and legitimize the sovereignty of the Northern Irish state?

MR. ADAMS: Yes. But it's also a mark of the arrogance of a British government that it dictates how other people should measure agreement. And I say that not to be provocative. I say it simply to state the reality of the situation. The six-county state is a gerrymandered statehood. If one peels back the veil of secrecy over it, one finds a situation that Ireland was partitioned without the consent, without the vote of one single Irish person, unionist or nationalist. Not one voted for the partition of Ireland.

And for over 60 years, the British rule in Ireland was administered by the unionists, who were given either a privilege or a perception of privilege in return for their loyalty. And we have had a permanent state of emergency. Foster, a former prime minister in South Africa, said that he would set aside all of the apartheid rules and regulations for one clause of the regulations under which the British state of Northern Ireland was governed.

The prime minister once said of Catholics, "I would not have a Catholic about the

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place." Another prime minister said, "We have a Protestant parliament for a Protestant people." And here, 25 years on, Catholics are still over two times more likely to be unemployed on the basis of their religion.

Take each of the six counties. County Tyrone, a majority of nationalists in that county who do not want to be part of the British state. County Fermanagh, a majority of nationalists in that county who do not want to be part of the British state. John Hume's constituency of Derry, of Feale, the same figure. Southdown the same; West Belfast, the same; South Armagh, the same.

Not only that, but the state sought to exclude those who it saw as disloyal, sought to exclude. Never at any point when nationalists sought to engage with the state did it in any way embrace or invite them to be part of the process. In all of the years of the parliament and of all of the years that nationalists attended there, they succeeded in getting only one act through that parliament, just one, one act through that parliament, and that was to do with Wales, Feale.

We also have a situation where, in terms of the demographics, that people for over 60 years were refused the right to vote in local government elections. And to me, sometimes looking back at the last 25 years, which have in many ways been horrendous, I remember -- and indeed, it was on the 5th of October, which is tomorrow, 26 years ago, that the civil rights struggle kicked off.

And if you want to get a sense of how the British state responded to a demand for the right to vote at local government elections, look back on the last 25 years, because what started on the 5th of October in Derry 26 years ago, one year later, in August 1969, the state collapsed, totally and absolutely, and has been maintained since on life support unit of British soldiers and all of the military paraphernalia.

So, of course, the unionists have to be part of whatever we build. Of course, we have to get their consent and their assent to whatever we build. But we're never going back to be treated like second-class citizens. We ask only equality and an end to division, and no vetoes for anyone; not for me. I don't want the veto; no vetoes for anyone and no British government to tell people in Ireland, any part of Ireland, how we should conduct our affairs. We can do that -- thank you very much, Mr. Major -- ourselves. (Scattered applause.)

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MR. KLEIN: Who on the unionist side do you consider the kind of rational opponent you could sit down and have a productive, however long discussion with about details of a lasting peace?

MR. ADAMS: I think that all of the unionists are rational. I think that the unionists -- and I don't wish to be in any way patronizing -- are more victims of British involvement in my country than I am. They are the people who held the line for the London government. And the bewilderment of the unionists at this time is because they feel a sense of betrayal and pending abandonment by that same government.

And the need for me and for people like me is to reach out, to seek discussions, to be flexible, to isolate the fears which are irrational -- and some of the unionists' fears are totally and absolutely irrational. Unionists tell me that they are afraid of rule. And I say to them, "Well, so am I." Unionists, however, do have other legitimate fears, quite legitimate concerns about their future.

And I think we have to build a pluralistic society. I think we have to separate church from state. I think we have to have matters of religion and civil liberties guaranteed, but as matters of personal conscience. So I do believe that in many ways the unionist leaders represent the Ireland of today. In many ways they represent the Ireland of yesterday.

I think we represent, to some degree, I hope, the Ireland of tomorrow. And what we want is for the unionists to engage on that basis, not looking back, but looking forward. They don't have to forgive. We seek to forgive and to move forward. So I think that talks will help to bring about more agreement, perhaps, than may seem possible on the surface.

Let me conclude by saying that Sinn Fein has never ceased to talk to the unionists. The leaderships refused to talk to us and to the SDLP and to the Dublin government. And at the moment, some of them refuse to talk to the British government. But we have never ceased to engage with grassroots unionism. And I myself have been involved in a lengthy dialogue over a very long time with people involved in religious or community or civic or business activity at the grassroots level.

And even in the week in which I left Belfast, the Belfast leadership of Sinn Fein

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conducted yet another course of those discussions. And Maria, who has accompanied me here, has also been part of those discussions. So grassroots unionism in many ways is ahead of its leadership. And I think that what's required from the British government is a clerk to lead the whole situation forward and to encourage and persuade the unionists that their future rests with the rest of the people of the island of Ireland.

MR. KLEIN: What will cause this cease-fire to work when one did not work nearly 80 years ago?

MR. ADAMS: The very fact that it didn't work 80 years ago is in itself and should be the main catalyst for working now. And I was reflecting last night with some people on what must have been the enormous sense of abandonment and betrayal when Ireland was partitioned; that what started in 1916, at a time when the rest of the world was lunging towards the great wars and to all of that, such waste, at the time when that was happening, men and women proclaimed the republic back in Dublin and actually signaled a beacon which saw the end almost of the British empire.

And when one considers five, six, seven, eight, nine years later, all of that great endeavor was reduced to a partitioned Ireland and a divided people, that must, I think, act as a motivator for all of us to make sure that this opportunity doesn't end the same way. We're approaching the millennium, and we should ensure that we do so with a new future before us.

MR. KLEIN: You mentioned some of the changes that should come about to help recreate the Northern Ireland society. Do you favor desegregation of the state schools from Catholic and Protestants going to school together?

MR. ADAMS: I think there needs to be a separation of church from state. I think in matters of education, that's a matter for parents. And they should have the right, of course, if they want, to have religious instruction and they want to have education through a particular religious institution. That should be their right also. And we shouldn't get caught up too much in this business. The education system in the north reflects Ireland today, a divided society. The education system in a new and a great Ireland should hopefully reflect that situation and be new and agreed. So I'm quite pragmatic on the current position, but I am very hopeful that we need to move everything forward, including the education of our children, and the people, you know, who will

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benefit more so than any other section of a peaceful and prosperous Ireland are the children of Ireland. They are the people who are going to benefit, and that's why there's enormous responsibility of us to move the entire situation forward.

MR. KLEIN: This questioner says you met recently with civil rights pioneer Rosa Parks, a symbol of nonviolent resistance. Some found that strange, since the IRA was engaged in violent resistance. What are your thoughts about this?

MR. ADAMS: I have to say that as long as Mrs. Rosa Parks didn't find it strange, that that's okay. It was by way of a personal as well as a political tribute. I was only eight or nine year old when she refused to move to the back of the bus. I remember when we went out from Coleraine to Dungannon, I remember being involved in squats and occupations and sit-ins and sit-downs and being mortar cannoned and battered and gassed and singing "We Shall Overcome" and "We Shall Not Be Moved" and all of that.

And I was actually just reading about -- reading a book about a year ago called "Eye on the Prize," and I actually never thought I would meet Rosa Parks, so it was by way of a personal as well as a political tribute, and I made it to her and I made it on behalf of Moira Drum a vice president of Sinn Fein, who was assassinated in a hospital bed. I made it on behalf of Sheena Campbell, a woman friend of mine, a Sinn Fein activist who was actually killed having a drink in a university bar with fellow students. I made it on behalf of Tracy Clinton, the wife of a Sinn Fein activist who was killed in our home, and I made it on behalf of Ray Farrell, an IRA volunteer, who was killed in Gibraltar. And Rosa Parks very gracefully accepted it and said, in quite quiet and humbling tones, that she wished and she wishes that peace will come to Ireland.

MR. KLEIN: This questioner says, "I was in Ireland at the time Bobby Sands died, and I was struck by how unconcerned most ordinary people in Dublin were. There was just a tiny demonstration. People seemed negative or defeated when they talked about Northern Ireland. Is there more the government in Dublin should be doing to unite the whole island?"

MR. ADAMS: Well, some people have said that the reason why there isn't a united Ireland is not just because of the policy of the London government but may well have been because of the policy of the Dublin government. I think that this present

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administration, Mr. Reynolds, has made huge strides to reverse all of that. I think the partition has its effects in both parts of Ireland. We oft times and understandably focus upon the north, but we have in the south of Ireland compelling reasons for Irish unity -- economic reasons, political reasons -- and we have there, I think it's fair to say, an understandable preoccupation by people just to live their own lives.

When you consider the amount of people who are here in the USA because they can't live any sort of decent quality of life in the south, one gets the sense of how they can at times be almost unconscious of what's happening in the north, but at every time and at every opportunity those people in opinion polls, despite censorship, despite revisionism, have all said they want to see Irish unity, and at the time that Bobby Sands died, which was a time of severe economic pressure in the south -- there was an election, and it's sometimes forgotten that two prisoners were elected as TDs to the parliament in Dublin -- Kieran Dougherty, who died in hunger strike, and Paddy Ackley.

So the instinct of people is there, the attendance at demonstrations is not a good indication of where people's hearts lie, and for a whole series of reasons, the economic sense, the political sense, the cultural sense, the historical sense of the need for Irish unity I think will become more and more obvious as time goes on and that when I return to Ireland, it will be in around the time when Prime Minister Reynolds will be convening a forum for peace and reconciliation, and that will show, in many ways, how concerned people in the south are to move forward into a new and a great Ireland.

MR. KLEIN: A question sent up by your friend Peter Hitchens of the "London Daily Express." (Laughter) If, as you say, you come here as a peacemaker, why do you choose for your entourage two men convicted of terrorist offenses, one of whom did not even contest the charges against him?

MR. ADAMS: This is at least the third time Peter has put this question. (Laughter) And when I answer, I give you the answer I give before, Peter. Peter has been a permanent part of our entourage. (Laughter and applause)

I am very pleased to have so many fine people in what you refer to as my "entourage." I met, when I was in Boston, with a man called Paul Hill. Paul Hill was a convicted bomber. There's no suggestion now that he was in any way guilty.

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As I said to you in New York, in Ireland, one is innocent until proven Irish, and I think that it's important to note that we have done, I think, with very few resources. We haven't got the strength of the British press with us. We haven't got all the PR resources or razzmatazz, so I think you should commend, Peter - where are you? - I think you should commend the Adams entourage, because we have kept you in a job these last few weeks. (Applause)

MR. KLEIN: We are, unfortunately, about out of time. Let me ask you one quick economic question before I go into the final question. Economic priorities - given the critical nature of the need for economic stability in Northern Ireland, what advice can you offer to Representative Scott Klug of Wisconsin, who is sponsoring legislation to eliminate U.S. contributions to the International Fund for Ireland? How can Representative Klug's perspective be changed?

MR. ADAMS: Is this the last question?

MR. KLEIN: No, no, there'll be one more.

MR. ADAMS: Well, I think it's a matter for people here to set about changing his perspective. The -- I'm not a brand of politician that comes here with a bag and bow, and nor do I think we have any right to demand any money from the USA, and nor do I think I can walk out of the USA at the end of this week and say there are all sorts of billions and millions of dollars promised, but I do think that what investments there are, and there have been considerable, that they should be governed by McBride principles legislation or similar requirements to ensure that they're investments in prosperity, investments in peace.

And there is, as I have said on a number of occasions, the foundation not just for peace but for prosperity, and that's what any public money or other monies should be aimed at, bringing about a peaceful and prosperous Ireland.

MR. KLEIN: Thank you. Before asking the last question, I'd like to present you with a certificate of appreciation for being here and a National Press Club mug. (Applause) Now we have, of course, given these to John Hume and to Prime Minister Major, and I hope you will all use your Press Club mugs when you can toast peace in Northern Ireland. (Laughter)

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The last question is have you talked to Jimmy Carter? (Laughter)

MR. ADAMS: Not yet. (Laughter)

Can I thank you for your hospitality, and especially for the National Press Club mug, which I see is made in China? (Laughter and applause) And can I simply just conclude by saying that whatever I have said at the end or towards the end of a very tiring and exhausting single transferable speech is what the British government sought for 20 years to prevent. Now, you may dismiss what I have said. You may disagree totally with what I have said. You may think some of it is rubbish, and, in fact, some of it may be rubbish, but you will go from here, I believe, unharmed by what I have said. (Laughter and applause) You may even wonder what all the fuss was about. You may, indeed, think I was a fairly mediocre speaker who made only a moderate contribution.

But let me say that it isn't I who the British government fear. It isn't I who the British government seek to keep information from. It is people like you, because the wall of censorship which has been built around my country is there to prevent people like you becoming aware, and all I'm asking for is as you form an opinion of what is happening, that it's a rounded opinion, so you've had an hour of a Republican view against 20 years of British disinformation and misinformation, and I thank you very much for giving me that hour of your time for now.

(Applause)

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